

Man Through the Ages



Vladimir Sogrin

Founding Fathers of the United States

Progress Publishers

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Historical Portraits



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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Chapter One. George Washington, Founding Father No. 1</i>	9
Commander in Chief of the Revolution	10
President of a Bourgeois-Planter Republic	31
<i>Chapter Two. Samuel Adams and the Fortunes of the</i>	
<i>American Revolution</i>	50
Rebel	51
Father of the War of Independence?	69
A Different Face of Samuel Adams	86
<i>Chapter Three. Alexander Hamilton: Prophet of Capital-</i>	
<i>ist Development</i>	98
Washington's Aide-de-Camp	100
Veterans and Loyalists	128
Secretary of the Treasury Who Wanted to Be	
Premier	140
<i>Chapter Four. Thomas Jefferson: Enlightener and</i>	
<i>Statesman</i>	153
A Provincial Childhood	154
Growing Fame	167
Between Dream and Reality	182
Statesman	197
The Presidential Office	225
<i>Chapter Five. James Madison: Illusions of the "Great</i>	
<i>Conciliator"</i>	242
"My Country Is Virginia"	244
The Making of a Nationalist	255
The Philosophy of the American Constitution	261
The Collapse of Illusions	286
<i>Conclusion. The Legacy of the Founding Fathers: the</i>	
<i>Past and the Present</i>	311
<i>Notes</i>	318

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the 1980s are marked by two important anniversaries—200 years since the end of the anticolonial war (1783) and the adoption of the Federal Constitution (1787). These important dates on the American political and historical calendar stimulate a growing interest in the national experience of the United States. The biographies of the Founding Fathers of the United States, the “great white men” of America, take special place in the vast historical literature.

In the United States, political leaders, monopoly heads and those intent to climb to the heights of power are wont to swear by the names and ideals of the founders of the American bourgeois republic. The Founding Fathers gaze down on the Americans from the walls of the Capitol, state legislatures, courts and other offices; streets in American cities bear their names, and the entire country bristles with monuments and memorials erected in their honor. The Founding Father cult is meant to fortify the belief of millions of Americans that the United States firmly stands guard of its founders' behests and that the policy of the present administration rests on a lasting and noble political tradition.

The book tells about the United States' five Founding Fathers whose lives, as the author sees it, mirrored most fully the upheavals of the era and who had a tremendous impact on the shaping of the American political tradition. Central among them are

Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson with whose names the two paths of the development of US capitalism are associated.

The book begins with a portrait of George Washington, the United States' first President. His defense of the interests of the planters, who were fighting the British Crown and Parliament for the right, among other things, to freely dispose of the lands in the West, had made him a member of the patriotic movement even before the War of Independence. He had played a modest role in the movement prior to the hostilities; but when the Continental Army was formed and he was appointed Commander in Chief, he moved to the key position among the patriots' leaders. As a general, he was successful in rallying and leading his men and officers and resourceful in applying new tactics in a way that baffled British generals. When the War of Independence was over, he opposed the plans for subordinating civilian power to the military and establishing a monarchy. He realized that the social basis for aristocratic institutions in the United States had been swept away by the revolution. As one of those who determined the postwar settlement in the United States he worked for establishing public authority capable of safeguarding the interests of the bourgeois-planter bloc.

The second chapter offers a portrait of Samuel Adams. Both in public perception and the American historiographic tradition Samuel Adams figures as the father of the War of Independence. The title can be argued against as one depreciating the deserts of other Founding Fathers; nonetheless one must acknowledge that Samuel Adams did personify the best traits of the American Revolution. He played an outstanding role in guiding the patriotic movement during the 10 years before the revolution. He organized the first patriots' associations known as “Sons of Liberty.” He skillfully steered town assemblies in Boston. He regarded farmers and workmen as the main force of the anti-British movement and was the first among the patriots' leaders to approve and justify the use of violence in the struggle against the

British. At the same time, his political evolution shows that there were limits to the revolutionary determination of the leaders of the movement, even the best of them. In his view, the goals of the revolution were reached with Britain's defeat. After 1783, he no longer recognized the people's right to oppose the authorities and, in defiance of his own former beliefs, announced any unauthorized action by the masses unlawful. Adams' transformation exemplifies political evolution of the bourgeois-planter clan of the United States' founders who, after the victory over Britain had been achieved, strove to prevent the masses from carrying the revolution further.

Alexander Hamilton's political portrait is offered in the third chapter. He had come to North America shortly before the War of Independence. His quick political career in the 1780s was due to his skillful and persistent effort to create a strong centralized state. He was among the first to recognize such a state as a reliable means of promoting economic, social and foreign-policy interests of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. He held one of the key posts in the first federal government, that of the Secretary of the Treasury, he had aspired to a far more important position, though. His tragic end—he was killed in a duel by his political opponent in 1804—was somehow consonant with the setback suffered by the northeastern bourgeoisie in their struggle for hegemony and with their ceding key positions to southern planters.

Thomas Jefferson, to whom the fourth chapter is devoted, was a controversial figure. As a thinker, he adhered to democratic ideals, demanded that slavery should be abolished and land be distributed among the needy free of charge, and he recognized the people's right to rebellion. As a political leader, however, he was moderate and capable of adjusting to the interests of slaveowners and the northeastern bourgeoisie. The author sees this contradiction as a drama rooted in the personality of this prominent enlightener, the third President of the United States. His exceptional intellectual potential was never fully

revealed and his dreams could not come true in a country worshipping the capitalist idol. Although many American democrats were inspired by his ideas, there was little in his practical experience they found it worthwhile to emulate.

The last chapter is devoted to James Madison, the fourth President of the United States. A comrade-in-arms of Alexander Hamilton in the days when the Federal Constitution was being adopted, he later went over to Jefferson's side. Madison's political career, with its apparently unaccountable zigzagging, vividly reflected the complicated and controversial interrelationship between the two groups that constituted the US ruling bourgeois-planter bloc. Madison gained recognition as a great reconciler, an expert in political compromise unsurpassed among the Founding Fathers. The son of a Virginia planter, Madison was at the head of those southern slaveowners who recognized the need for a strong alliance with the northeastern bourgeoisie. The Constitution of 1787, in whose drafting Madison played a special role, was the supreme manifestation of the unity of the bourgeois-planter elite. Madison rightfully earned the title of philosopher of the American Constitution. However, as early as the 1790s, the consolidation of the position of the United States both domestically and internationally resulted in a strife between the commercial and financial bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the slaveowning planters, on the other. Madison's breaking with Hamilton, the leading mind of the northeastern bourgeoisie, and his aligning with Jefferson, whom he regarded as a proponent of the United States' agrarian way of development, were indicative of the growing controversy between the two dominant social groups in the United States. Having replaced Jefferson in his presidential office in 1809, Madison tried to find new ways to reconcile the interests of the North and the South. However, the logic of historical development proved his plans to be illusory.

The author does not aim to present exhaustive biographies of the Founding Fathers of the United

States. With biographies of almost all the prominent leaders of the young American Republic available in our days in many volumes, such an attempt would be naive, to say the least. The aim is different: to try to determine, proceeding from the recent publications of their archives and from research findings, the part each of them had to play in the historic events of the first decades of the United States' existence. To what extent did their lives reflect the dramatic upheavals that marked the United States' years in the making? In what way did they contribute to the establishment of the American ideological and political tradition? These are the questions the author attempts to answer in this book.

Chapter One

GEORGE WASHINGTON, FOUNDING FATHER No. 1

On February 22, 1982, the USA marked the 250th anniversary of George Washington's birth.

There is every reason to regard George Washington not merely as one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, but as Founding Father No. 1. During the War of Independence (1775-1783) he was Commander in Chief of the American Armed Forces; he chaired the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 which drew up the Federal Constitution; he was the first president of the young state (1789-1797) and actually played the part of the father of the nation until his death in 1799. In the eyes of many generations of Americans he has been the father of the nation even though American historiography, especially the biographers of other Founding Fathers, above all those of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, have repeatedly argued against ascribing this title to Washington.

Few of the American historians have ever dared to criticize the first President of the United States: like Caesar, Washington is above suspicion. His biographers will stress his nobleness and democratism and remind that, unlike Cromwell and Napoleon, the military leaders of two European revolutions, the Commander in Chief of the American revolution refused to accept the dictator's title and did a lot to consolidate the republican regime.



Birth place of Washington

Commander in Chief of the Revolution

George Washington came from an old family of British nobility a record of which dates back as early as the 12th century. In 1657 his ancestors escaped from the British revolution and found refuge in the New World. By the time of the Stuart Restoration in 1660 they had settled in Virginia, the first and largest of the North American provinces. They were prosperous enough not to be tempted to return to their former homeland even when the course of developments there changed in their favor. By the time the future President of the United States was born, they had firmly established themselves among the Virginian elite.

When he was still young, George Washington was taught the skill of running a slaveowner's planta-

tion. He was also urged to master the fundamentals of martial art: constant clashes with Indian tribes made it worthwhile. As for sciences, they largely remained beyond the scope of his interests. His educational background looks modest when compared to that of other Founding Fathers. His military career was dazzling: at the age of 23 he was already a colonel and Commander in Chief of Virginia's armed forces. It goes without saying that his rapid promotion was in no small measure due to his family's position.

He was a man of his time, and his mentality mirrored its intrinsic contradictions. One of them was as follows. Settlers coming from Europe preferred starting their own farms to hiring themselves out to plantation owners. Attempts to enslave Indians failed. Therefore, labor was in short supply. The planters had to use slave labor. Such was the paradox of the nascent American democracy: the white Americans had their freedoms and rights secured for them at the expense of denying elementary rights and freedoms to the black slaves. The exploitation of slave labor deformed the planters' basically bourgeois world outlook. They acquired some of the ways typical of a privileged estate. In this sense, George Washington was no exception. Combined in him was the practicality of a bourgeois businessman and the looks and demeanor of an aristocrat wont to establish his superiority over the rank-and-file compatriots through his very appearance. Many of his contemporaries commented on his arrogance and aloofness.

That he had a knack for business became evident in his young age: he started earning money when he was 16 and was soon able to acquire 500 acres of land. His inheriting the family estate of Mount Vernon (today the site of the George Washington Memorial Museum) followed by his marrying, in 1759, Martha Custis, a rich widow, multiplied his wealth. When the War of Independence began, he was paying taxes for 12,500 acres of cultivated land in eastern Virginia; he also owned 25,000 acres of virgin land in the west of the province. On the eve of the war he

Mount Vernon



owned 135 slaves, nearly thrice the number he had at the time he married. During the war, Washington publicly refused to accept the salary fixed for the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army by the Continental Congress. However, he did not fail to take advantage of financial and agrarian measures launched by Congress to increase his wealth. At the time he was elected President of the United States, he ranked among the owners of the largest plantations and had 216 black slaves.¹

The exploitation of slaves and violence with respect to the indigenous North American population were the reverse side of Virginia planters' prosperity. Extermination of Indian tribes as a means of promoting planters' interests acquired the force of an econom-

ic law: the rapid depletion of soil fertility and growing competition led the planters to seize more and more unsettled lands in the West. In the early 18th century, after a daring sortie inland, Virginia's Governor Alexander Spotswood declared in the name of King George I that henceforth the province entrusted to him would stretch from ocean to ocean. Condensed in this expressive formula was the slave-owning planters' expansionist program which spelled an overt war on Indian tribes.

George Washington's rapid promotion came as a reward for his effort to implement Virginian planters' expansionist plans. The North American planters had long relied on support from Britain. For its part, Britain sought to capitalize on the military ardor of

Martha Custis



the Americans in its rivalry with France, the main colonial competitor it faced in the New World. Washington, just as other representatives of his class, upheld Britain's imperial ambitions during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) which in the American theater of war boiled down to skirmishes between the English and the colonists, on the one hand, and the French and the Indians, on the other. Among the consequences of the war, however, was the collapse of the Anglo-American harmony and an acute conflict resulting in the War of Independence.

Britain, which had gained the victory in the Seven Years' War at the cost of draining its treasury, tightened its grip on the colonies to prevent a total disruption of its own economy. The repressive measures taken by the British affected the planters' economic interests: the Proclamation Line, which was established in 1763 to keep the colonists confined to the eastern side of the Allegheny Mountains, made the planters and farmers suffer from a shortage of land, while the Stamp Act enforced in 1765 against the will of the colonial representative bodies, hit at their purses. Their protests only caused the spread of restrictions to their political rights and liberties: the

George Washington as
a young man



King and Parliament banned the elected assemblies and town meetings, ruled that the salary fixed by the Crown for provincial governors and judges be their sole remuneration, and stationed a regular army in North America.

In an effort to give a theoretical substantiation to the struggle for independence, the Americans, their mentality well developed along the bourgeois lines, turned to the ideology of European Enlightenment with its criticism of absolute power and class inequality and its advocacy of individual rights and freedoms. A "pamphlet war" against Britain was launched. Before being waged on battlefields, the revolution, as John Adams put it, had unfolded in the minds and hearts of people for 15 years.² The patriotic movement put forward a number of public figures who had the dominant influence over the minds of the Americans, among them John Adams, Samuel Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Dickinson. The list did not include George Washington who for a long time remained in the shadow of the prophets of the patriotic movement.

His influence was fairly modest. At the stage of ideological and political preparation for the War of Independence, Colonel Washington was "too illiterate, unlearned and unread,"³ to use John Adams' phrase, to have any substantial influence over the mounting movement.

To judge from Washington's letters of the prerevolutionary period, there was a direct link between his strongly critical attitude to Imperial policies and the economic interests of the planters. He was concerned about their growing liability to and dependence on the British trade companies. He was much displeased by the fact that provincial banks and assemblies were forbidden to issue paper money (which served to increase planters' debts) and protested against the free western territories being handed over to the Canadian province of Quebec.⁴ It was these pragmatic bourgeois motives that brought him to the ranks of the patriots.

Growing within the patriotic movement was criticism of social inequality among the Americans, the lack of political rights and privation suffered by the lower strata of the white population. In Washington's home province of Virginia this trend was represented by Thomas Jefferson, George Mason and Richard Henry Lee. They contended that the social and political system in Virginia, where supreme legislative, judicial and executive power was vested in nonelective bodies and where the elective House of Burgesses turned into an aristocratic sinecure for the richer planters, was a parody of democracy. A permanent member of the House of Burgesses since the age of 26, George Washington was deaf to their criticism. He evinced no interest in the issue of internal socio-political changes which appeared on the agenda of the patriotic movement on the eve of the War of Independence and brought its revolutionary meaning into sharp focus. As for the objectives of the anti-colonial struggle, he shared them unconditionally.

Washington's appointment, in June 1775, to the post of army Commander in Chief of the insurgent North American provinces was both unexpected and



Washington's Headquarters in Cambridge near Boston

natural. Surprisingly enough, put at the head of the revolutionary army was an outsider, someone who had not belonged to the leadership of the patriotic movement before. Among the leaders there were many brilliant publicists and orators, but to no one the revolution could entrust its sword. George Washington, his military experience substantial enough by that time, proved to be the only nomination acceptable for the Continental Congress.

When nominating Washington, Congress members were surely mindful of his wealth: it was general belief—traceable to the antiquity—that one's independence of thought and political behavior was directly proportional to the size of one's fortune. In the eyes of patriots Washington must have also personified strong willpower. An imperturbable face,

a heavy look in the eyes, a short thick neck and a powerful body, combined with confident manners and domineering ways spoke of strength. He kept the republic's high-ranking executives at arm's length and allowed no familiarities, not even on the part of close friends. It was reported, for instance, that Gouverneur Morris, a well-known New York banker and one of the leaders of the moderate patriots, once accepted his companions' dare to greet the Commander in Chief familiarly, "Good morning, George!" He got such an icy glance in response that he never took such a liberty thereafter.

Washington's title of the Commander in Chief of the united colonies' army lay him open to incessant taunting on the part of the Loyalists: the republic's armed forces existed on paper only and, at the beginning, Washington had to play the unattractive role of a general without army.

When, on July 3, 1775, Washington arrived in a Boston suburb where the American army was stationed, he saw a motley crowd of assorted people who were, as he commented, ill-disciplined and wont to accept no orders and obey no government. No one knew for sure what the strength of the army was: the figure mentioned to Washington varied from 14,000 to 20,000 men. The Commander in Chief had to content himself with the fact that the army's morale was stronger than its military capability.

It should be recalled that throughout the War of Independence Washington never had more than 20,000 people under arms at a time. Admittedly, apart from the Continental Army, each of the states raised, by a Congress decree, its own armed forces in the form of militia detachments. They participated, as a rule, only in those operations which were carried out in their own state. As soon as the hostilities moved beyond the state borders, the militiamen considered themselves free of any obligations to Congress.

Washington's semiguerrilla army had to fight well-organized regular British troops. During the war its strength multiplied, growing from 8,000 in 1775 to



The Battle of Bunker Hill

56,000 at the end of the war. Altogether, over the same period, the British ground force doubled to reach 110,000 people.

Fighting a strong enemy required a great deal of courage and self-possession on Washington's part. Official London was determined to take revenge on the American revolutionaries, threatening them with the gallows. When talking about the leaders of the War of Independence, English gentlemen would abandon the usual gracefulness of their manners and language. A British general was reported to have threatened to go from one end of America to the other and geld all the males. As Benjamin Franklin commented, "He took us for a species of animals very little superior to brutes. The Yankee was understood to be a sort of Yahoo, and the Parliament did not think the petitions of such creatures were fit to be received and read in so wise an assembly."⁵ London considered the government of the United States as unlawful rabble and Washington as a rebel. According to an announcement made in London

four months after Washington had been appointed Commander in Chief, a criminal conspiracy and a riot swept North America.

Under the circumstances, Washington behaved with dignity. When the first message from the British side, impudently addressed to "Mr. Washington" was received, the Commander in Chief ordered it be sent back because "we have no person in our Army with that address." Another note, this time addressed to "George Washington, Esq., etc. etc. etc." met with the same response from the unbending general. To his aide's insistence that "etc. implied everything," Washington's answer was succinct: "It does so, and any thing."⁶

Shortly after Washington had been nominated Commander in Chief, he differed with the Continental Congress on the prospects for furthering the revolution.

The events of the second half of 1775 betokened the colonies' inevitable break with England. The battles of Concord and Lexington on April 19, 1775, signaled what is now considered to be the beginning of the War of Independence. In June, the militia units raised in the provinces successfully stood the trial of the Bunker Hill Battle. In October, the British ruthlessly burned down the town of Falmouth (Portland). Although the hostilities were in full swing, the Continental Congress continued to deny the charges of seeking independence and offered an olive branch to British Parliament. Washington was indignant at the indecisiveness shown by Congress. He expected its decisions and arguments to be different. He was one of the few leaders of the patriotic movement who in January 1776 enthusiastically responded to *Common Sense*, a pamphlet by the radical leader Thomas Paine, which carried the first passionate call for independence and establishing a united North American Republic. It was then that Washington first differed with the leader of the Virginian moderates Carter Braxton who referred to Paine's *Common Sense* as a "dirty petit" pamphlet. Wrote Washington, "A few more of such flaming arguments as were

exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning of 'Common Sense', will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of a separation."⁷ By his orders the pamphlet was read out to the troops of the Continental Army. Washington's stand was determined by a number of factors, among them the intrinsic logic of the part he was to play as Commander in Chief: unlike politicians, he could not win his laurels other than on a battlefield.

The proclamation of the United States' independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, was a major moral incentive for the young North American Army. Its goals now acquired a truly historic meaning. At that time, it still resembled a guerilla formation. Washington had to exert great efforts to transform it into a regular army. The task facing him was formidable indeed: the repudiation of the very idea of raising and maintaining regular troops was an ideological precept of the revolution deeply implanted in the minds of the patriots. Their belief in the unconditional supremacy of civilian power over military was another obstacle in the way of establishing one-man management of the army. Both men and officers preferred the democratic militia spirit to the tough army discipline. What struck Washington about the army placed under his command was familiarity (an officer shaving one of his men was the first scene that shocked him when he joined the troops) and regionalism which made soldiers refuse to fight outside their home states. Both officers and men were ill trained. Gun crews were sometimes crushed to death by the gun they fired. With such an army placed at his disposal, the general had to display outstanding organizational and political abilities to get things going.

Washington combined various methods to tighten discipline. He did not shun violent means and even succeeded in the introduction of corporal punishment (at times, he made use of his exceptional physical strength to quench the soldiers' attempts at a mutiny), but he laid greater emphasis on material incen-



George Washington
after the capture of
Dorchester Heights.
A portrait by
Gilbert Stuart

tives. He especially favored the granting of lands as the chief measure that might have, as he told Congress, "considerable Influence on a permanent Inlistment" and, therefore, on the course of war.⁸ The general's arguments were heeded and Congress issued a decree stipulating the granting of land to men and officers who would stay in the army until the end of the war.

The army's pressing needs and the disastrous military and political situation account for Washington's increasingly radical views. His stand on a number of issues was more "left-wing" than that of most of the bourgeois-planter leaders. He stigmatized speculators and enterprising bourgeois seeking to profit from the hardships of war, he demanded that the tendency to capitalist acquisitiveness be stemmed, and insisted on regulating market prices, confiscating the Loyalists' property and commandeering whatever was needed for the army from the better-off patriots.⁹ Washington's intransigence, bordering on cruelty, as

regards his political and military adversaries inspired respect, fear, and a belief in his omnipotence. Both in the army and throughout the country he was seen as the nation's savior.

The war revealed Washington's genius as a commander. The first serious battle he undertook proved his ability. In the early hours of March 4, 1776, the Commander in Chief of the American Army gave orders to occupy the strategically important Dorchester Heights near Boston. To distract the enemy's attention from the main area of attack the Americans opened artillery fire at targets away from it. The British swallowed the bait, and the Americans captured the Dorchester Heights by a vigorous assault and consolidated the captured ground. Impressed by the unexpected success, Congress resolved to cast a gold medal in Washington's honor and to send it to him as an award.

Late in 1776, both the Americans and the British were stunned by Washington's smashing victory in the battle of Trenton. Almost throughout the year, with General Howe methodically driving the Continental Army southwards, the British had been luckier than the Americans. In December 1776, faced with the danger of being taken prisoner by the enemy, the Continental Congress fled from Philadelphia. Washington was granted dictatorial powers, and the revolution's cherished principle of the supremacy of civilian power over military power collapsed. Free from the bonds of civilian authority which had always lain heavy on him, Washington was able to deal a powerful blow at the British at Trenton.

This is how it happened. On the Christmas Eve of 1776 the British were anticipating an ultimate victory over the Continental Army. They were waiting for the Delaware River to freeze over so as to make a crossing and deal a final blow at Washington's troops. However, their plans were frustrated by a daring counterattack undertaken by the American commander. On a cold Christmas night his troops crossed the ice-filled Delaware River and impetuously attacked the unsuspecting enemy. With

The Victory at Trenton



only 4 men killed and 4 wounded, the Americans took 1,000 prisoners.

The ingenious and varied tactics Washington used in his skirmishes with the British secured for him a great advantage over the British generals. Faced with a numerically superior enemy, he avoided engagement in major battles, choosing to wear the enemy down with surprise attacks. Howe failed to involve him in an open battle. In fighting the enemy's numerically superior regular troops, the Americans for the first time used open formation, the tactics they learned from the Indians. Frederick Engels wrote of the rebels that they "although not drilled were all the better able to shoot from their rifled guns; they were fighting for their vital interests, and therefore did not desert like the mercenaries; nor did they do the English the favour of encountering them also in line and on clear, even ground. They came on in open formation, a series of rapidly-moving troops of sharpshooters, under cover of the woods."¹⁰

Washington's military career was by no means a path strewn with roses: in the early years, the Amer-



ican army was more often than not defeated by the British. The course and nature of war operations required from Washington great ingenuity in organizing defenses. During the early 6 years of the war, the American army had to surrender one strategic point after another: in 1775, Boston surrendered, in 1776, New York, and then, Philadelphia, the United States' first capital. The successes scored by the British are easy to explain: their regular army, organized according to age-long traditions, had no difficulty in overwhelming the untrained, semiguerrilla troops recruited among farmers and artisans. What is surprising is not that the British won one victory after another, but that throughout 6 years they never managed to deal a crushing blow at the American army.

In the face of the grave and sustained military setbacks, George Washington had to deal with the intrigues and conspiracies against him in his own camp. Unlike Charles Lee, Benedict Arnold and other inordinately ambitious generals who brought dishonor upon their own names through cowardice, pusillanimity and even treason, Washington stood



Washington's retreat at Valley Forge

all the trials honorably. Early in 1778, when the British authorities thought they had brought the American army to its knees, they offered a truce to the Continental Congress and promised to pardon the "rebels." Washington rejected the offer. As before, he was determined to traverse the path he had embarked upon to the very end.

The treaties of commerce and alliance with France concluded in 1778 largely conduced to a change in the hostilities in favor of the Americans. Following the French example, Spain joined the ranks of the United States' allies in Europe. The European feudal monarchies formed pragmatic alliances with the bourgeois republic with a view to weakening mighty Britain. But these alliances had an important role to



play in establishing American independence. In 1781, the Americans supported by the French troops won a decisive victory over the British at Yorktown. Washington, Commander in Chief of the allied forces, celebrated his biggest success. Seeing no possibility to suppress the insurgent colonies after the crushing defeat, Britain ceased the hostilities.

The completion of the War of Independence revealed painful contradictions within the patriots' camp. The left-wingers, who had insisted on substantial democratization of the political structure in the provinces, were now seeking to have state legislatures pass such laws as would favor the lower and middle classes. Between 1783 and 1786, bills subverting the interests of the upper classes were passed in 7 out of



Washington and his generals

the 13 states. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, political and ideological leaders of the moderates, demanded restriction of democratic innovation; in particular, they urged a revision of state constitutions and Articles of Confederation, which, in their view, were inordinately radical. That purpose was to be served by the Philadelphia Convention.

Some of the hotheads among the high-ranking



army officers and politicians of the young republic favored the idea of establishing individual power, a monarchy. They believed that a monarchy would best suit the interests of the bourgeois-planter bloc in the setting of economic dislocation and social upheavals, at a difficult time when an independent state was in the making. They pinned their hopes on George Washington who, due to the enormous authority he had won during the war, was, they felt, the

only person worthy of the role of an American monarch. But Washington chose to use his authority to achieve a contrary end, that is, to stem the efforts towards establishing a monarchy in the United States. His reply to a letter from Colonel Lewis Nicola, one of the first to offer him what in fact amounted to a monarch's crown, revealed his firm allegiance to republican beliefs. "With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment I have read with attention the sentiments You have submitted to my perusal. Be assured, Sir, no occurrence in the course of the war has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the army, as you have expressed... I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address, which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable."¹

Washington's refusal to become a monarch gave many American historians a cause for singing him unceasing praises. But when admiring his dignity, his biographers tend to overlook the fact that contrary to the case of Cromwell and Napoleon, who turned into political dictators, Washington behaved as he did not because he was an exceptional personality but because of the favorable conditions in which the American bourgeois republic was being formed. America had not known feudalism and therefore was devoid of a social context conducive to the emergence of aristocratic and monarchic institutions. Incidentally, the Founding Fathers were aware of that. The American bourgeois republic was not threatened from the left because the radical democratic movements in the country were relatively weak. Neither did it face a danger coming from the right: the country was separated from feudal Europe by the Atlantic Ocean and, unlike the Great French Revolution of 1789, the American Revolution did not have to protect itself against the host of European monarchies. Besides, the European monarchs

could afford ignoring the establishment of a bourgeois republic in North America because it posed no threat of exporting revolution to the Old World and upsetting the balance of forces in the international arena. The American bourgeois revolution had no need for a dictator of the Cromwell or Napoleon type, and Washington's noble gesture of renouncing his powers as Commander in Chief after the war was therefore in accord with reality.

President of a Bourgeois-Planter Republic

Following Britain's recognition of the United States' independence, Washington retired to Mount Vernon. However, he very soon started receiving letters urgently requesting him to chair the forthcoming Philadelphia Convention. A month before its opening, Washington accepted the post and held it until the end of the Convention. Although his participation in drafting the articles of the Federal Constitution was minimal, his prestige was decisive in having the document approved by the public and ratified by conventions in the states. The former Commander in Chief made no revelations in his pronouncements about the Constitution. On the whole, he approved of the theoretical and political principles underlying the 85 articles, *The Federalist*, written by Hamilton, Madison and Jay following the Convention.

The American Constitution of 1787 established strong executive power and set no limit to the possibility for presidential reelection. In explaining the reasons for giving so much force to executive power, the Convention stressed that the presidential office was going to be taken by the impeccable Washington. Indeed, he had no serious contenders. But the participants in the Convention, Washington included, were apprehensive of the outcome of the elections to the first National Congress. Their opponents, Antifederalists, were preparing to have the maximum possible number of their supporters elected to Con-

gress in the hope that this would help to subsequently amend the Constitution along democratic lines. Although Washington claimed a nonpartisan position, he exhorted his supporters that it was essential to take measures to prevent the Antifederalists from getting the upper hand. He unequivocally backed the Federalists on many occasions.¹² Although he never left Mount Vernon during the election campaign, he was by no means an impartial observer. Having shown that he wished for presidency, he wanted to make sure that National Congress would support his political line.

The first presidential election to be held in the United States bore little semblance to the present-day elections. First, few states entrusted the election of electors to the population; in the majority of cases that was the business of legislatures. Second, the electors cast their votes, without leaving their own state, for two candidates (one of them was to represent some other state). The returns were sent to National Congress, where the Chairman of the Senate opened the envelopes in the presence of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Then, the votes were counted and the contender for whom the majority of votes had been cast was proclaimed President, while the one who trailed after him was proclaimed, regardless of his party affiliation, Vice-President. This procedure sometimes led to what today would be considered a paradox: in 1796, for instance, the Federalist John Adams was elected President and his main political opponent Thomas Jefferson, Vice-President.

The first presidential election did not feature any serious rivalry as each elector cast one of his two votes for Washington. He has proved to be the only unanimously elected US President. (This goes both for his first and his second term in office.) The other votes were divided among the remaining candidates. Gaining half the number of votes given for Washington, John Adams became Vice-President.

Washington was waiting in Mount Vernon for the election results. The votes were counted on April 6,

1789. The news of his presidency reached Washington on April 14.

Bells were rung, crowds of people, flowers in their hands, came out into the streets, and banquets were given, as the President and the Vice-President crossed the country on their way to the capital. The Federalists' goal behind the festivities was to celebrate their victory and to impress on the Americans that their country, though still young, was powerful and the man at its head merited glory and authority. That goal was also served by the ceremony of inauguration. Held on April 30, 1789, it struck the onlookers as a monarchic, rather than a republican, ritual.

Thus, in its 13th year of independence the United States was being born a second time, as it were. The first President and the first Congress were elected, the first national government and the first Supreme Court were formed (previously, the United States had had neither federal executive nor federal judicial power whatsoever, and national legislative power had only existed in embryo). The setting up of federal government bodies proclaimed superior to the state governments was a historically progressive step. However, their power established, the bourgeois-planter bloc sought to promote their own class interests. From the very start of his presidency Washington established himself as a staunch representative of the bloc.

Washington's republican beliefs never developed into democratism. As years passed by, his attraction to aristocratic distinctions grew ever more vivid, manifesting itself in many ways. He delivered his first message to US Congress in person in the presence of both Houses. This was an imitation of the practice adopted by the British constitutional monarchs. (In 1801, it was relinquished by Thomas Jefferson who decided to refrain from making an oral presentation of his message in Congress.) The House of Representatives and the Senate, aware of the President's taste for British tradition, reciprocated his "throne address" with an address of their own.

First presidential reception in New York



President Washington liked his birthday to be celebrated in a grand manner, with festivities lasting for days. The gorgeous balls given by George and Martha Washington attracted the cream of metropolitan society. There were many ways in which the President drew distinction between himself and his environment. No one in New York could have ever mistaken the President's handsome carriage for somebody else's. Congressmen even started thinking of an aristocratic title to befit Washington; some of them were suggesting "Your Excellency" or "Your Elective Highness."

Vice-President John Adams cultivated President's taste for distinction. Reputed as a prominent theorist, he contended with Jefferson and Franklin for the title of American Enlightener No. 1. As years went by, however, he started to make pronouncements that negated many of the tenets of the Enlightenment. Holding a post second to that of the President, Adams advanced the idea of "natural and enduring aristocracy." Among the latter, he contended, the republic's political leaders were to be recruited; each of them was to be given an appropriate title. He tried to convince other politicians that common



Washington's inauguration

people would have no respect for the head of the United States addressed simply as "President Washington."

Washington was a strong character. In an effort to exact ever more prerogatives for himself he had to counter the opposition of the Senate and the House of Representatives; as a rule, he emerged victorious. The debate on setting up a department of foreign affairs turned into a discussion on the ways of forming a government. Half of the senators came out in favor of the ministers' responsibility to the legislators and the latter's participation in forming the government and making changes in it. It was the vote of Vice-President Adams that turned the scales in favor of the President. The debate on the matter in the House of Representatives was dragged out; eventually Washington was granted weighty administrative powers and the right to exercise individual leadership and to control high-ranking government officials. All that laid the foundation for a presidential republic where the elected head of government enjoyed much greater authority than the King of England.

Martha Washington,
the First Lady



Washington's special interest in guiding foreign affairs was bolstered by the bill on setting up a Department of Foreign Affairs. Adopted on July 27, 1789, it provided, in 4 different paragraphs, for the Secretary of State's subordination to the President and his performing such duties as would be assigned to him by the latter. Washington usually made his own, individual decisions as regards major foreign-policy issues.

Already in the early days of his presidency Washington started to rely on religion as an important lever of state power. Although the church was separated from the state, the correspondence between the President and clergymen, just as certain steps taken by Congress, show that the sides were interested in mutual support. The church and the state joined hands in reaching for common social and political goals. It was not without Washington's assistance that religious sentiment grew throughout the country.

Washington also furthered the creation of a powerful bureaucratic machinery. In the early 1790s, there were 780 federal office-holders, within ten years the figure grew to 2,120. The President was bombarded with applications from office seekers lured by lucrative posts and power. (The President's



George Washington in
1790. A portrait by
Edward Savage

yearly salary amounted to \$25,000 in gold, 10 times that of the ministers and other high-ranking public servants.) During the last decade of the century, despite all the criticism by the democrats, public servants succeeded in urging 50 to 100 percent rise in their salaries. Meanwhile, the average Americans' incomes were falling. Congress was showered with hundreds of petitions from veteran soldiers. The benefit fixed for them amounted to \$60 a year. Many of them received as little as \$20 or \$15, and some, only one-eighth of the normal pension, that is \$7.50. Meanwhile Washington insisted on an increase in his colossal salary, motivating his demand by the interests of national prosperity and security. Even Congress, usually gracious in response to the President's demands, refused to heed his request.

Unlike his own ways as Commander in Chief, Washington as President remained blind to the interests of common Americans as far as the agrarian problem was concerned. The Continental Congress' statutes concerning the manner in which nationalized unsettled land in the West was to be distributed, set the minimum size of the plots of land to be put on sale as 640 acres and the minimum auction price as \$1 an acre. With the average auction price of land

John Adams, the first
Vice-President
of the USA



running to \$1.26 per acre, the cost of a plot of land in the 1790s amounted to \$800; meantime, the annual income of small farmers in many cases did not exceed \$50 a year. In the circumstances, many Americans seized land on their own, becoming what is known as squatters. Washington and the Government made every effort to check the spontaneous mass migration to the West.

Washington claimed to take a nonpartisan stand in his political activity and even went as far as denouncing contention among political parties. Yet, soon after he and the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate came into office, political factions started to mushroom. Ironically enough, he gave the two key posts in the Government, those of the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State, to Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, the founders of contending political parties. Bitter differences between Hamilton and Jefferson manifested themselves fairly soon. The United States' paths of development prescribed by either of them caused a split in Congress first into factions and later,

into the Federalist and the Republican Parties.* Acute debate flared up between them on every matter, and Washington found it increasingly difficult to place himself above their squabble. Gradually Hamilton rose higher in his favor than Jefferson, and started to perform what was actually the role of prime minister. Washington never made a finished Federalist of the Hamilton or John Adams type. Basing his political course on compromise, he succeeded in maintaining and even strengthening the young North American Union. Since the compromise served the interests of the Federalist Party to a greater extent, the 1790s went down in American history as a period of Federalist government.

Why did Washington give preference to the Federalist, rather than the Republican, party? Historians differ on this matter. The simplest explanation is suggested by those who think that Washington's choice was due to the influence of Hamilton's "demoniacal" personality. However, Washington had no less powerful a personality than Hamilton and would have never subordinated himself passively to the latter's course. It would be much more correct to say that he adopted it. What makes Washington's choice look strange is that Hamilton's policy ran counter to the interests of the agrarian circles in general and the position of the planter class in particular, and enhanced the influence of the northeastern bourgeoisie associated with trade, manufactories and financial activity. One of Washington's biographers suggested that the preference he had for Hamilton stemmed from his negative attitude to slavery. The argument is not convincing enough: although his will is known to instruct to set his slaves free after his death, he never thought of abolishing slavery as a system.

A study of Washington's political evolution during

*In historical literature the latter is sometimes described as the party of Jeffersonian Republicans. They left the historical arena in the 1820s. The Republican Party which emerged in the United States in the 1850s in the course of struggle to abolish slavery should be distinguished from the Jeffersonian Republicans.

the years of his presidency will show that he approved of Hamilton's plans because he was convinced that they would conduce to the United States' self-preservation and survival, would serve to consolidate the class foundation of the bourgeois-planter republic and establish a social order matching his own moderate views. Moreover, the Hamiltonian Federalists proved to be a party that strove for order. They upheld the institutions and legislation promoting the narrow interests of the upper crust of the bourgeoisie and the planter class, and worked to limit and conserve the bourgeois-democratic transformations achieved by the American Revolution. Jefferson's followers, on the contrary, campaigned for developing and multiplying the bourgeois-democratic innovations introduced by the revolution of 1775-1783 and for spreading the rights and freedoms instituted by it to larger groups of the population. The Federalists' political stand was in harmony with Washington's convictions.

The foreign policy that was charted by the Federalists and implemented by Washington was especially contradictory. It was differences on foreign-policy matters that led to a serious conflict between the President and the Secretary of State. Late in 1793, Jefferson was forced to resign. The matter of choosing a foreign-policy ally for the United States caused the greatest controversy.

At first sight, the independent American Republic had no problem about choosing an ally: it was destined, one might think, to enter into an alliance with France whose assistance had been essential to the success of the American struggle for independence. It was bound to France by the treaties of commerce and alliance (the latter spearheaded at none but England). It might also seem that an alliance between the United States and Great Britain was out of the question. The latter had held the North American provinces in the grip of colonial dependence for nearly two centuries, poured death on the Americans for nearly a decade, ignored the provisions of the peace treaty of 1783 and outraged the national dig-

nity of the Americans. That was the reasoning typical of most American patriots at the end of the 18th century. However, the Federalists took a different approach to finding the foreign-policy bearings for the young republic, and set their minds on achieving an alliance with Britain.

The Federalist foreign-policy doctrine was based on the idea that a course toward expanding economic and political ties with Britain was the best tactics of all as it could lead to sustained political independence and economic self-sufficiency. This idea was expected to win people's support for the party's goals. The Federalists held that the United States could turn into a mighty power only in the conditions of a lasting peace. In order to achieve it, the United States had to make certain concessions, at times major ones, to Britain.

This leitmotif was widely employed by the Federalists in the period of preparing and ratifying the Jay Treaty which was approved by the Senate on June 24, 1795. The treaty secured for Britain an incomparably better opportunity for gaining the American market and confirmed all the former colonies' prewar debts to Britain. In his letter to Jefferson John Adams wrote that another war with Britain would add two or three hundred million dollars to the American debt, leading to the militarization of the country and resulting (at this point Adams appealed to Jefferson's democratic convictions) in "the advent of monarchy and aristocracy."¹³

The Federalists' economic arguments reflected the fact that even after gaining political independence the United States was still Britain's semicolonial appendage. They maintained, for one thing, that as advocates of a protectionist policy they had no intention of turning it dogmatically against London for the simple reason that Great Britain was America's main supplier and customer. The Republicans, they argued, were inclined to portray Britain as the strangler of the commerce of other countries, while depicting France as a selfless friend. Why then, the Federalist leaders asked, did American merchants ship their

wares mainly to British possessions (here they cited impressive figures), while only a trickle went to French ports? Since exports to British possessions were the chief source of profit for American merchants, Federalist Fisher Ames argued, customs duties from British imports, which were dozens of times greater than those from France, were the Federal Treasury's chief item of revenue. To give preference to French over British imports therefore meant, first, a substantial reduction of federal revenue and, second, an additional indirect tax for American shoppers, because French commodities were much dearer than British, and would remain so for a long time to come.¹⁴ Ames's arguments are clear evidence that in maintaining commercial relations with Britain the Federalists were prompted by pragmatic considerations.

The Federalists' political arguments against France were these: shaping its strategic line, the US Government should reckon with the fact that America's former ally could no longer be regarded a stable and consequently strong and dependable political entity owing to the revolution which had swept out the old order, and that alliance with a destabilized country was fraught with dangerous and unpredictable consequences. The attitude of the Federalists was nothing less than cynical: they were prepared to unilaterally scrap the 1778 Treaties and abandon republican France to the tender mercies of the monarchs of Europe who had joined hands in a counterrevolutionary conspiracy against it.

Jefferson and his associates approached the question of allies from an entirely different angle. The handing of the keys of the torn down Bastille to George Washington in 1789 by revolutionary France was for the Republicans no empty gesture. For them it meant the beginning of a new and higher phase in the Franco-American political alliance. For now the alliance of the American Republic with what had been a French monarchy had grown into an alliance of two political communities which, unlike all other countries in the world, were governed by popular consent.



Washington's last minutes

The differences between the Federalists and the Republicans over foreign policy gradually moved into the foreground, so that in due course they became known as the pro-British and pro-French parties. Relations deteriorated still more after the overthrow of the monarchy in France at the end of 1792 and the proclamation of a French Republic. Early in 1793, France declared itself to be at war with Britain. It was no longer America, as 15 years before, but France that counted on the aid of its military and political ally in the clash with Britain.

In the circumstances, Washington consulted both Secretaries, Hamilton and Jefferson, about the United States' commitments to France. Hamilton flatly denied the existence of any such obligations. France's declaration of war on Prussia, Austria, Britain, Spain and other European nations, he argued, invalidated the 1778 treaties. Since the treaties defined the military and political alliance between the two countries as a defensive one, he contended, the Americans were entitled to refuse any assistance to France when it was acting as an aggressor. Moreover, the Secretary of the Treasury orated, the treaties of 1778 had been concluded with the King of France and not with the Convention that beheaded the King. As for the National Convention, it could not be regarded as a juridical person because its powers had not been

Edmond Charles Genet



sanctioned by the electors.

Hamilton also tried to disprove the Jeffersonians' argument that the assistance rendered by France to the United States in the struggle for independence imposed certain moral obligations on the Americans. Hamilton's counterarguments appeared plausible: France had helped the United States not because it sympathized with the American Republic but because it wanted to promote its own mercenary goal of weakening the English monarchy, its main adversary in Europe. Hamilton ignored the fact that during the War of Independence that goal had been pursued by the French monarch he mourned and not by the French people.

In relating to Washington his own opinion of the US obligations to France, Jefferson objected to Hamilton's proclaiming the 1778 Treaty invalid. In his view, the treaties were an agreement between the two nations, rather than the two governments. No change in the form of government in either country could therefore invalidate the treaties. Jefferson recommended that the National Convention should be recognized as the legitimate French government and that the ambassador appointed by it be given official recognition.

Jefferson was more cautious as regards US military obligations to France. With neither a navy nor regular ground forces of their own, the Americans, he maintained, had better refrain from getting involved in hostilities. However, when Hamilton suggested that Washington should proclaim the United States' neutrality, Jefferson made a number of objections. In the first place, he objected to using the term "neutrality" as one questioning the French-American treaties of 1778 and recommended that no haste be made about issuing the proclamation. Second, Jefferson felt that the proclamation should be issued in the name of Congress, rather than the President, and that it should be very carefully worded.

On reflection, Washington decided to issue a proclamation of neutrality in his own name but to avoid using the word "neutrality." The proclamation announced the United States' decision to refrain from interfering in relations among European powers. By way of making a concession to Jefferson, Washington agreed to receive the envoy of the National Convention, Edmond Genet.

Genet arrived in the capital of the United States early in April 1793, two months after he had landed in Charleston. The fervent young French revolutionary stopped in each little town on his way to the capital to address the people with revolutionary exhortations. He evidently saw his mission to the United States as one mirroring Benjamin Franklin's mission to France during the American War of Independence. Genet overtly recruited American citizens to the expeditionary force that was to seize Louisiana and Florida. Having reached Philadelphia, the National Convention's envoy, ignorant of the alignment of forces in the American Government, turned to Hamilton with a request for a loan to his country. The Secretary of the Treasury replied that the request was misaddressed. Genet then asked the Secretary of War Henry Knox to let the French have several guns for their ships, but was told that he would not be given even a pistol. Washington gave Genet a chilly welcome, too. The walls

of his office were decorated, specially for the occasion, with the portraits of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette who had been executed by the National Convention. In the end, Genet realized that the only door open to him was that of the Secretary of State's office. He never concealed his special liking for Jefferson and on one occasion, when asked whether he found members of the American Government stupid, he answered, "Yes, with the sole exception of Jefferson."

Genet launched unusually vigorous anti-British activities in the United States. He recruited American sailors to serve aboard French privateers. The French Government granted these privately owned ships the right to plunder British merchant ships. The captured British goods were put on sale in American ports. Genet was bold enough to seize, with the help of the Americans he hired, the British merchant ship *Little Sarah*. Renamed *Little Democrat*, it was to plunder, along with other French privateers, British ships approaching the American coast. The incident with the *Little Sarah* exhausted Washington's patience, and he demanded that Genet cease his illegal activity.

Genet's reaction was unprecedented: he demanded that a special session of Congress be convened so that his dispute with the President be settled by the representatives of the people. He certainly went too far and but for another sharp turn in the French Revolution he would have been deported to France. In the summer of 1793, a popular uprising in Paris brought Robespierre and his followers to power. They proclaimed Genet, along with other Girondists, an enemy of the people. Genet, instead of returning to his homeland where the guillotine awaited him, married the daughter of George Clinton, the governor of New York and Jefferson's political partner.

Genet's activity cast suspicion on Jefferson and strained to the extreme his relations with other members of the government. In December 1793 he was compelled to resign. From that time Washington's foreign-policy course left even less doubt about his partisanship of the Federalist Party.

In 1794, Washington leveled strong public criticism at the American democratic societies supporting the French Revolution. In his sixth annual message to Congress he accused them of instigating a rebellion and undermining the Constitution. The President's pronouncements, perceived as an encroachment on the Bill of Rights, brought forth sharp attacks from the Republicans. Bitterly disappointed in the hero of the War of Independence, they condemned him as a monarchist.

The conclusion of the Jay Treaty signaled a victory for the pro-British foreign-policy course. It was by no means equally beneficial to the United States and Britain. The British agreed to meet the provisions of the 1783 Peace Treaty and withdraw their troops from the northwestern forts. Yet, the withdrawal was to be completed as late as June 1796. In the frontier areas the freedom of fur trade and navigation along the Mississippi River, profitable for British merchants and missionaries, was legalized. Both sides took steps to normalize economic ties, renounced trade discrimination and agreed to accord the most favored nation treatment to each other. The Jay Treaty guaranteed Great Britain against protectionism on the part of the Americans for at least a decade. The United States pledged itself in principle to meet the American subjects' liabilities to British creditors for their prewar debts within the range of 2 to 5 million pounds (up to 10 million dollars). The American merchants, ship owners and financiers who had a stake in economic relations with Britain were satisfied with the terms of the treaty.

No matter how unwilling he was to undertake responsibility for the treaty (in his private correspondence he spoke about it with distaste), Washington supported it in public. While accepting Hamilton's logic in general, he laid greater emphasis on the need for the United States to maintain unconditional and rigid neutrality in relation to the contending European powers. There could be no doubt about pragmatic considerations underlying the Pres-

ident's allegiance to isolationism: according to the latter doctrine the United States' noninterference in international affairs was the surest way to guarantee self-preservation. In the farewell address to the nation he wrote in September 1796, Washington warned against permanent foreign alliances.¹⁵

Washington's pragmatism did not imply his refusal to support ideological and class interests of the bourgeois-planter bloc. It rather spoke of his desire to balance these interests with the actual possibility for the emergent American Republic to consolidate and promote them. Just like the other Founding Fathers Washington firmly believed the American nation to be "chosen" and "exceptional," one having Messianic destiny. However, the President felt that before revealing that to the world the United States had yet to grow strong enough to stand on its own feet. To achieve that goal, all possible ways and means were to be used. He agreed with Hamilton on that point.

Washington's concern for the self-preservation and survival of the North-American nation accounts for his disapproval of the nascent two-party system. The party spirit, he contended, was the worst enemy of American unity.¹⁶ Today his warnings may seem prophetic if one takes into consideration that in the course of its evolution the first American two-party system reflected ever more vividly the contradictions between the capitalist North-East and the planter South. With these contradictions in existence, Washington's hope for cementing the American unity was illusory. However, this became manifest much later, during the Civil War that was to become the highlight of the next, 19th century. Washington died in 1799, blissfully ignorant about the dramatic destiny of the union he had fathered.

Significantly, Washington's career bears out that the properties that make one a historic personality are not ingrained but are rather born of the requirements of the times. The struggle for the just cause of independence brought the planter Washington close to the interests of the country and the people. The revolution that swept the North-American provinces

instilled in his mind republican convictions and a belief in the people's right to choose their own path of development. But when the revolutionary war was over and consolidation of the dictatorship of the bourgeois-planter bloc was put high on the agenda, Washington came to be increasingly guided by the narrow class interests of the upper crust. Although in the years of his presidency he was no less influential than during the revolution, his will and authority were no longer of the former history-making importance. His figure grew dimmer, as it were, and was almost lost among other proponents of the interests of the powers that be.

Chapter Two

SAMUEL ADAMS AND THE FORTUNES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Samuel Adams has not been done out of his fair share of historians' praises. The American authors of his three recent biographies are especially generous in lavishing them on their hero. Cass Canfield puts Adams atop other Founding Fathers in the very title of his work: *Samuel Adams's Revolution, 1765-1776. With the Assistance of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, George III, and the People of Boston*. For his part, Donald Chidsey declares: "He virtually invented independence in America. Before his time it had been a dirty word. He brought it respectability; indeed, he brought it life." Lastly, Paul Lewis ranks Samuel Adams with Alexander the Great, Napoleon and Bolivar.¹

Samuel Adams's earlier biographers, too, invariably portray him as one of the most romantic and heroic figures in American history. William Wells, the author of the most complete three-volume biography of Samuel Adams, sees him as the architect of literally all patriotic undertakings that originated within the American national liberation movement. The style chosen by John C. Miller, a well-known student of early American history, for his monograph on Samuel Adams makes it a most inspired narrative. Vernon Louis Parrington, an authority on American thought, regards Adams as a paragon of democratic thinking.² (In our view, Parrington failed to reveal the deep-

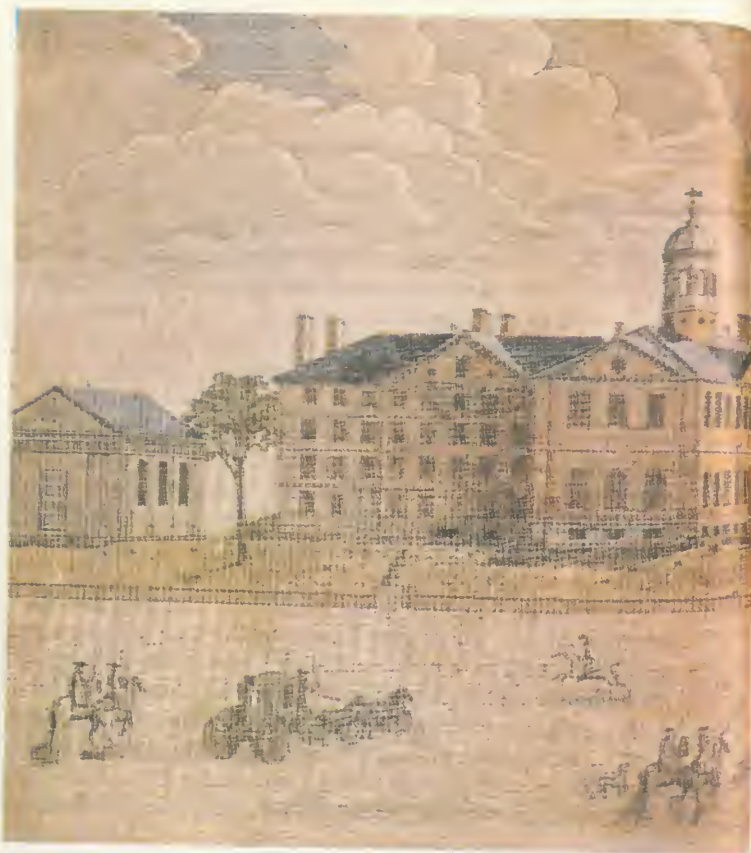
rooted contradictions intrinsic to his intellectual and political make-up.)

Rebel

Samuel Adams was born in 1722. His family belonged to one of the most respectable clans in the North American province of Massachusetts. Samuel Adams, Sr., a merchant and the acknowledged leader of the local congregational church, was a descendant of the Puritan settlers who had once fled from the persecution on the part of the Stuarts and the Anglican Church, taking refuge in the New World. Fervently pious, he thought of an ecclesiastic career for his son. However, after a short time at Harvard College, the best educational establishment in the province which later grew into the famous Harvard University, his son gave up theology in favor of political science and law.

His change of mind was due to the atmosphere that reigned in his family and to his father's passion for political activity (rather than religious rites). Samuel Adams, Sr., was repeatedly elected justice of the peace and member of the provincial assembly and determined to rise ever higher in the hierarchy. Relying on a caucus of his own creation, he dared to contend with the most influential families in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts is traditionally regarded as the cradle of democracy in North America. And not without reason: here, ordinary citizens were more actively involved in political life than in many other North American provinces. It was a custom with the citizens of Boston, the administrative center of the province, to attend town assemblies convened to deal with the problems of local self-government. A considerable number of people in the province owned immovable property—a house, a plot of land, etc. That, under the legislation in force in colonial America, entitled them to participate in the elections to the provincial legislative assembly.



Harvard University when Samuel Adams attended it

Although political life in Massachusetts featured certain elements of democracy, it was an area reserved, just as in all other provinces, for the elite. Real political power was vested in the most influential and, as a rule, wealthiest family clans. They had



their own "family voters" and even their own "family voter districts." From generation to generation family voters obediently cast their votes for the representatives of the most powerful families who in fact inherited their seats in the assembly. In some

provinces such practices led to the extreme weakening of political competition and to the concentration of power in the hands of a certain family faction. For instance, in Massachusetts' neighboring province of New Hampshire political power was usurped by the Wentworths. The Wentworths inherited the governor's seat and dictated their will both to the assembly's upper chamber, which was appointed by the governor, and to the lower—elective—chamber. In Samuel Adams's young years a similar role in Massachusetts was played by the faction headed by Governor Shirley.

The Shirleys' attempts to monopolize the distribution of political offices in Massachusetts were opposed by two other influential families, the Adamses and the Otises. In his wrangling with Shirley, Samuel Adams, Sr., sought to enlist the support of the Boston middle and lower classes. In the 1730s-1740s, he openly acted in the name of the People's Party. The caucus of the party regularly met in the respectable-looking, classical English-style mansion owned by the Adamses. The gathering stigmatized the Shirley group as a weapon in the hands of the moneyed aristocracy and made themselves out champions of democracy. Sitting quietly by his father's side, Samuel Adams, Jr., imbibed the speakers' ideas bolstered by frequent references to the fathers of British constitutionalism, Edward Coke and John Locke. Subsequently, he elaborated on Coke's and Locke's principles in his master's thesis where he discussed the legality of opposing the higher authorities in the event a republic could not be preserved by any other means.

The area of activity Samuel Adams, Jr., found himself involved in upon graduation soon proved alien to him. The business he started with the thousand pounds his father had lent him soon failed. The sum was quite a fortune in those days but it was soon drained as a result of a string of unhappy bargains the young businessman concluded. Samuel Adams, Sr., himself on the verge of bankruptcy, was in no position to help his son out.



Boston city center

In the early 1740s, Samuel Adams, Sr., conceived the idea of having a Land Bank that would grant loans and render other financial support to low-income citizens. Adams saw that as a means of rallying the lower classes of Massachusetts around himself. The Bank was set up but it soon went bankrupt and, at the insistence of the government faction, was liquidated. In addition to the big financial losses that he suffered, Adams was removed, along with other Bank founders, from all political posts. In order to finish him off as a rival Shirley deleted his name from the list of nominations to the upper chamber of the legislative assembly. A year later, in 1748, Adams, Sr., died. People remembered him as a martyr and champion of democracy. His son, Samuel Adams, Jr., hastened to proclaim himself the continuer of his father's cause.

He assailed the ruling faction in *Public Advertiser*, a socio-political weekly he started in the year of his father's death with the help of the People's Party

Caucus who regarded him as a true successor to their former leader. In a 1768 report to the King of England, the then vice-governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, wrote: "He was for nearly twenty years a writer against government in the public newspapers."³ For all his activity, the influence exerted by Samuel Adams and the opposition as a whole on political life in Massachusetts remained insignificant. That was mainly because the critique they delivered was largely perceived as revenge for their personal and family failures, and lacked concentration on major socio-political issues. These issues were not tackled by Adams until 1764, when history itself handed them over to him, so to speak.

In 1763, the Massachusetts authorities appointed Adams—in a bid to brush aside the meddler—to the unpopular post of tax collector for Boston. That year, taxation posed a problem, and not for Adams alone. By the end of the year five tax collectors found themselves indebted to the treasury. Samuel Adams's adversaries hurried to accuse him of embezzlement. Adams could have hardly foreseen that a year later his having been removed from his office would propel his political career and put him at the head of the struggle against all tax collectors.

In 1764, Britain, its victory in the Seven Years' War gained at the cost of depleting the Imperial Treasury, saw a way out of its difficulties in taxing the inhabitants of the colonies. The Grenville Cabinet hastened to get the Parliament's approval of the Stamp Act. The latter envisaged levying direct parliamentary taxes on the property of the North American colonists.

In a sense, the attitude to the Stamp Act served as a measure of maturity of the bourgeois consciousness of the colonists who had been assimilating the constitutional principles of the British revolution of 1640 for over a century. The anti-Stamp Act campaign that swept the North American provinces betokened a revolution. Impressed by its growing scale, John Adams, another famous Bostonian, a cousin of Samuel Adams and the future second President of the

United States, described, in his diary entry of December 18, 1765, some of its manifestations—the public outcry expressed in the press, thunders shot forth from the pulpits, resolutions adopted by town assemblies, votes taken by townspeople, and the fear that made British officials tremble. Assessing the effects of the parliamentary act of 1764, Samuel Adams exclaimed: "What a blessing to us has the Stamp Act eventually been!"⁴

What was there about the Stamp Act that outraged the Americans? No matter how burdensome the new tax was, the enterprising colonists could well afford to pay it. What worried them was not the size of the tax. Dr Benjamin Franklin who at that time represented the interests of one of the provinces, Pennsylvania, in London, explained that to the British Parliament in 1766. The Americans could not tolerate being refused the right which ranked first among the demands the English revolution put forward in 1640: "no taxation without representation." The Americans, Benjamin Franklin declared, would never consent to a law "if not laid by their own representatives."⁵

The readers might be surprised to learn that the North American colonists wished to be regarded as British citizens who, while residing in the New World, enjoyed equal rights and freedoms with the people of London or Liverpool. For the 18th-century Americans the desire was natural. It was equally natural for them to try to learn from the experience and lessons of British history, the revolution of 1640 and the abuses of Charles I who paid for having violated the rights of his subjects with his own life. Samuel Adams was convinced that the people of Boston would share his opinion when in one of his anti-Stamp Act proclamations of 1765 he declared that "taxation without representation" was the reason behind the downfall of the Stuart dynasty. Patrick Henry, member of Virginia's provincial assembly, must have been equally convinced of support from other North American colonists when he warned, in May 1765, that the reigning King George III

James Otis



should draw a lesson from the fate of the beheaded King Charles I.

His May 1765 speech turned Patrick Henry, a hitherto unknown Virginia assembly member, into an American celebrity. Subsequently he somewhat boastfully described his speech, and the anti-Stamp Act resolution he submitted to the lower chamber of the Virginia assembly as the first protest against the Stamp Act. One of Samuel Adams's biographers justly argued against these claims because Adams had come out with a similar protest and a similar resolution a year before. However, the biographer's attempt to prove that Samuel Adams's May 1764 proclamation was the first public protest against the parliamentary decision to levy taxes on the North American colonists without their consent⁶ belittles the role played by other patriotic leaders. For instance, in 1764 in Massachusetts it was James Otis, and not Samuel Adams, who was ranked first among the champions of the Americans' rights.

James Otis expounded the arguments the Americans could use in urging bourgeois rights and freedoms in his brilliant pamphlet *The Rights of the British*

Colonies Asserted and Proved published in 1764. Otis considered the British constitutional acts to be the foremost source of the Americans' rights. He entered into a kind of goodwill dialogue with the British appealing to their bourgeois sense of justice. He sought to convince them that it would be inconsistent on London's part to refuse the Americans their rights to representative government, inalienability of private property, immunity of the home and other freedoms for which the British had shed their blood. This argument formulated the American patriots' creed for many years ahead. Yet, for all its consistency, it suffered from an indisputable weakness, that of equating the colonists with the British citizens. The leaders of the Empire would have never recognized their equality.

James Otis's reference to the theory of natural law provided him with a much stronger argument in the struggle for the colonists' interests. In 17th-18th-century Europe, the doctrine of natural equality was primarily a critique of the inequality of social estates and hereditary privileges of the monarchs and the nobility. The doctrine provided unlimited possibilities for egalitarian interpretations. Indeed, according to its main postulate God created all men in his image; therefore, in their natural, primordial condition all men had absolutely equal rights. That is why there could be no limit for the advocacy of equality of any kind. (In 18-century Europe the French Utopians Meslier, Mably and Morelly criticized both class and economic inequality among people.)

Otis's purpose in referring to the theory of natural equality was not to criticize inequality in terms of property (he was a bourgeois to the core), or to criticize the inequality of social estates (the latter was non-existent in North America), but to negate the superiority of one nation over another and to denounce national and colonial oppression. He invoked the laws of God and Nature in order to prove that the Americans and the English had equal rights. In their natural condition, he argued, people had not been divided into colonists and metropolitans, they had

been equal in all respects and had not forfeited their right to equality with the emergence of civil societies and various state associations.⁷

When he turned to the teachings of the prominent European authorities on natural law, such as Samuel von Pufendorf and Hugo Grotius, he was surprised to discover that their theories never covered the fate of colonial peoples. Determined to correct the "mistake" of his teachers, he was one of the first to advocate equality of the natural rights of colonists and metropolitans. His doctrine became a powerful weapon in the hands of the patriots and subsequently gave rise to the call for an independent American state. However, Otis himself never advanced the slogan of independence.

The settlement of differences between the colonies and Britain as suggested by James Otis envisaged the integration of North American provinces, other parts of the British Empire and the metropolitan country itself into a kind of a world constitutional monarchy. His belief in the inevitability of the integration of the colonies and the metropolitan country into a single state mirrored the immaturity of American national consciousness and the colonists' sense of consanguinity with the British. The only kind of practical action proposed by James Otis was working for the representation of North American provinces in the British Parliament which, as he saw it, was to be transformed into an imperial representative body.

The most advanced thinkers among the North American patriots immediately saw the contradiction between Otis's bold theories and moderate political recommendations. His call for a struggle to transform Parliament into an imperial representative body and to have seats in Westminster reserved for American representatives was not supported by the patriots. They had enough common sense to see that a handful of colonial representatives would never succeed in changing the policies of the British Parliament. Samuel Adams, who regarded Otis as a comrade-in-arms and admired his theoretical knowledge, was nonthe-



John Dickinson

less the first to criticize his political recommendations. He made it clear to the patriots that the colonies could never be represented in Parliament fully and equally enough. Their being represented in Westminster, he contended, would eventually turn against them because it would legalize the Parliament's tyranny over North America. Consequently, he argued, the struggle for representation in the British Parliament would only take the patriots along the wrong path.⁸ Samuel Adams insisted on limiting parliamentary prerogatives in governing the provinces through broadening the rights of local assemblies. This largely accounts for his growing popularity with the Massachusetts patriots and the fact that he eventually replaced James Otis as their leader.

No matter how important, that was not the sole reason for his success. There were other leaders who insisted on broadening the provincial assemblies' rights to govern the life of the colonies. After 1764 their pamphlets, proclamations and resolutions literally flooded North America. Samuel Adams did not stand out among such writers as John Dickinson, John Adams or Richard Bland. But unlike them, he was a born leader who felt in his element in the turmoil of town meetings in Boston, at the clandestine terrorist gatherings, or when violent outbursts of anger led the crowds to destroy British property or

John Adams and his wife Abigail in 1766



make short work of tax collectors. He was a man of action, of exploit, a charismatic leader—to use a modern term—who fascinated the masses, who believed in them and could masterfully direct them against political enemies.

Even his appearance distinguished him from the other leaders of the patriots. Compare him, for instance, to John Dickinson, the leader of Pennsylvanian patriots. In 1767-1768 Dickinson was the most popular figure among the patriots. He owed his fame to the 12 *Letters of a Farmer in Pennsylvania* in which he railed against King George III and Parliament and their usurper ways in North America. At the patriots' gatherings and parties toasts were proposed to the "Farmer of Pennsylvania." None of them, however, had ever seen Dickinson. He had neither a desire nor energy enough to lead the crowds. He impressed John Adams, who first saw him in 1774, as a man who "could not live a month." (Incidentally, Dickinson did not die until 34 years later, having outlived most of the other Founding Fathers.) Samuel Adams was different: he had an



ascetic face and fiery eyes of an uncompromising Christian preacher who never wavered in this faith. Joseph Galloway, a leader of the American moderates, who yielded to Samuel Adams's pressure at sessions of the Continental Congress in 1774, was amazed by the way he looked. He thought him to be a fanatic who never ate, nor drunk, nor slept, who devoted all his time to thinking, and showed unbending will in achieving his goals.

Another dominant influence among the patriots, John Adams, could not compete with his cousin as the leader of the movement because he stubbornly and for a long time opposed the involvement of broad masses in the patriotic movement, refrained from engaging in debate at town assemblies and meetings and disapproved of resorting to violence in the struggle against the oppressors. In 1771, Thomas Hutchinson, at that time the Massachusetts Governor, said, "If it was not for 2 or 3 Adamses we should do well enough." He ascribed the dominant role among the "2 or 3 Adamses" to Samuel who, in his phrase, attained a position which enabled him, in

the late 1760s, to govern the city of Boston, the House of Representatives and ultimately the Council in any way he liked.¹⁰

Samuel Adams's political behavior was populist in its style both before and after 1764. However, after 1764 it was determined by loftier, truly dramatic motives. Before 1764, the enmity between the Adamses and the Otises, on the one hand, and the Shirleys and the Hutchinsons, on the other, did not go beyond the boundaries of family clans. After 1764, when the Massachusetts ruling families, headed by Thomas Hutchinson, turned into the main proponents of the repressive policies of the British King George III in North America, the opposition which the Adamses put up to them acquired a truly patriotic meaning.

George III, crowned in 1763, clearly had a bent for absolutist government. Even though he did not dare to abolish the bourgeois constitutional regulations (which he succeeded in limiting) in Britain itself, he did not shun establishing a truly arbitrary rule over North America. The Stamp Act was followed, in May 1765, by a decree billeting British troops in North America. The decree ran counter to one of the central principles of the bourgeois ideology of the 17th-18th centuries according to which it was inadmissible to maintain a regular army in peacetime. In December 1765 the British Parliament suspended the activity of the New York Assembly until October 1, 1767, thereby violating the most important principle of the British bourgeois constitutional law, under which representative bodies were only to be dissolved with their own authorization. Lastly, in 1767, the Townshend acts were published. Just as the Stamp Act, they contradicted the principle of no taxation without representation. The tax revenue was now to be spent on the upkeep of the colonial administration and the governors. This ran counter to another principle of bourgeois law, namely, obligatory financial dependence of executive authorities on legislative bodies, in our case, on the assemblies. The Declaratory Act, passed in 1766, announced the Americans' claims to a representative

government unlawful. It brought the role of provincial assemblies to nought. As a result, by 1767 the bourgeois freedoms of the North American colonists were substantially undermined.

Colonial dependence was the main obstacle in the way of unhampered development of capitalist relations and the bourgeois socio-economic system in the North American provinces. That is why, unlike the European bourgeois revolutions, the American bourgeois revolution of the late 18th century was an anticolonial, rather than an antifeudal revolution. The antidemocratic consequences of colonial oppression manifested themselves to the greatest extent in the political government of the provinces.

Both in metropolis and the colonies political government was a case of the so-called "mixed government": the king and the governors appointed by him to control the North American provinces personified monarchic power in Britain and in the New World, respectively, the House of Lords and the colonial councils, personified aristocratic power, and the House of Commons and the lower chambers of colonial assemblies—democracy.

In the North American version of "mixed government" democratic elements were more limited. For instance, the prerogatives of monarchic power represented by provincial governors were broader here than in the metropolitan country. The governors were elected only in the tiny corporate colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut, which had preserved their internal political autonomy; in all other provinces they were appointed by the Crown or by the colony's proprietary. They were granted the right of absolute veto, entitled to set up or dissolve assemblies to their own discretion, appoint provincial councils or approve the lists of their members submitted by the lower chambers; that is, they enjoyed the prerogatives which had been forfeited by the Crown in the Kingdom of Great Britain. Supreme judicial power in the provinces was often vested in the Governors as well as council members.

Provincial councils, which played the role of

assemblies' upper chambers, constituted another branch of American "mixed government." In their importance they were second to monarchic power. Their membership was limited, varying from 12 to 18 persons. It was not overnight that two-chamber legislative assemblies appeared in the colonies. In the early years of the colonies' existence, some of their councils sat together with the lower chambers. However, the emergent socio-political elite sought separate representation in the upper chambers. For instance, in Massachusetts some members of the assembly broke away to form a council (the General Court) in 1644, and in Maryland, in 1650. Shortly before the revolution the councils turned into a separate, "aristocratic" branch of government. In each province, the council, just as the governor, was superior to the lower chamber, the province's sole elective body.

In describing the American system of "mixed government" and especially its distinction from the British version one should take into account that towering above it was a powerful and masterful political superstructure—the British Crown and Parliament. Traditionally, the British imperial policy with respect to North America has been regarded within two periods—the one before and the one after the Seven Years' War. During the first period, regarding North America as a source of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods, Britain adhered to the principles of mercantilism. It did not display any desire to exercise direct political control over the provinces. The latter therefore enjoyed a certain degree of self-government, especially in the 17th century. After the Seven Years' War Britain supplemented the economic oppression of the provinces with direct political diktat. Now the provinces suffered from the burden of "taxation without representation" (which contradicted the precepts of the English bourgeois revolution of the 17th century); they also had to face other manifestations of arbitrary rule—the dissolution of the juries, the abolition of the principle of the inviolability of the home

and property, and the main provisions of the Habeas Corpus act, the restriction of the powers of the assemblies or their complete disbandment, the formation and billeting of a regular army in peacetime, the subjugation of the civilian to the military authorities and the regulation of production and trade. There is no denying the fact that the preservation of the North American provinces' colonial dependence precluded progressive development of bourgeois political democracy and capitalist economy.

Samuel Adams responded to the repressive measures taken by Britain by increasing the arsenal of the means of struggle. As early as 1764 he realized that there was little sense in the provinces fighting the King, Parliament and governors individually and proposed convening a Stamp Act Congress to be attended by representatives of all the colonies. The holding of the Congress in 1765 marked a first step toward a united North American patriotic movement. Then, Samuel Adams called on all the provincial assemblies to organize an all-American campaign to boycott British goods. Boston merchants were the first to respond; however, they were not supported by merchants in New York and other provinces. Adams was bitterly upset by the failure. The lessons he drew from it served to further radicalize his political position. He realized that merchants and other propertied classes were no longer to be relied on. He became convinced that it was "the yeomanry of the Continent, who only, under God, must finally save this Country."¹

Samuel Adams's ability to see that the popular masses were to play the decisive role in the patriotic movement put him atop other patriotic leaders who confined themselves to preaching "moral" methods of influencing the King and Parliament. He felt that petitions to Parliament and negotiations with its members were of little effect and made a strong case for the use of force against British oppressors. The calls issued by Sam, as he was known among Massachusetts' Sons of Liberty, did not remain unheard. It was in Boston, on March 5, 1770, that the first



The Boston Massacre, March 5, 1770

bloody skirmish between the patriots and the red-coats (British regular troops) occurred. Five patriots were killed in the clash.

The next day, Samuel Adams convoked an emergency town meeting (townspeople gathered for such meetings at the leader's first call) and got it to adopt a number of resolutions demanding that the red-coats be immediately withdrawn from Boston and

those guilty of the murder be brought to court. As soon as the resolutions were passed, he rushed, at the head of a group of Sons of Liberty, to the house of Governor Hutchinson and besieged it until the governor agreed to withdraw the British troops from the town.

Adams's determination gave rise to one revolutionary initiative after another. In 1767-1768 two provincial assemblies, those in New York and in Massachusetts, were dissolved in defiance of their members' protests. Whereas the New York leaders confined themselves to verbal and published protests, Samuel Adams, who, as always, relied on the support of the Boston town assembly, immediately sent out messages to all the counties in the province proposing that each of them should send representatives to an extraordinary colonial convention. The convention, the province's first representative body, met in Boston in defiance of the will of the King and the governor, in September 1768. Although the convention dissolved as soon as British troops were brought to Boston, it was an event of tremendous, unprecedented importance in American history. Thomas Hutchinson described the actions taken by Samuel Adams and the Boston town meeting as "a revolution in government." According to another representative of the authorities, "so daring an assumption of the Royal Authority was never practiced by any city or town in the British Dominions, even in the times of greatest disorder ... when the great Rebellion [this is how the English revolution of the 17th century was dubbed by its adversaries] was at its highest."^{1 2}

Father of the War of Independence?

The abatement of the British repressive acts in North America in the late 1760s and early 1770s resulted in the decline of the patriotic movement. It was kept alive only in Massachusetts which turned for a number of years into the center of the patriotic movement in North America. This is largely ac-

counted for by the fact that in this province the patriots were counteracted by one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the British interests, Governor Thomas Hutchinson.

Following the political practice widely spread in the provinces, Hutchinson abused the patronage by appointing his relatives and friends to all the administrative and judicial posts available. His opponents were outraged by his usurping all executive, legislative and judicial power in the province—he was governor, head of the Council, and Chief Justice, all at a time. He flouted the rights of the provincial assembly, intent on depriving it of any political influence in the colony. He declared that it was the royal edicts and not the decisions of the elective body that constituted the supreme law of the colony.

Hutchinson's tough line impelled Samuel Adams to think of a substantiation for home rule, that is, the state autonomy of North America within the British empire. His call for home rule was best formulated in his petition, *The Rights of the Colonists*, submitted to the Boston town meeting in November 1772. The document was remarkable in many respects: its author propounded that the state originated from social contract and that the people had the right to annul it once they found it had ceased to serve their interests; he also contended that the colonists' rights were determined by the laws of "the state of nature" rather than the British constitutional acts. Later, John Adams suggested—rather absurdly—that Thomas Jefferson had copied the Declaration of Independence from his cousin's *Rights of the Colonists*. In fact, for all the remarkable ideas it formulated, the latter piece of writing did not contain the most important demand advanced in the Declaration of Independence, the demand to sever all bonds with Britain. Besides, many of the ideas set forth by Samuel Adams were borrowed—which does not belittle his merits—from other patriotic leaders.

For instance, the idea of home rule had been put forward by Benjamin Franklin as early as 1766, that is, at least five or six years before it was taken up by

any of the other patriotic leaders. Since 1770 he advocated home rule as the only concept consonant with North American interests.

The concept, as set forth by Benjamin Franklin, was unprecedentedly well-substantiated and complete. Its gist was as follows: the North American provinces and Britain were two sovereign parts of the British Empire enjoying equal rights; in both of them, supreme legislative power was vested in their own representative bodies, the Assemblies and Parliament, respectively; the latter was in no way superior to the former and did not have any authority in the New World; the connection between the two political communities was maintained solely through the King, whose power in both parts of the empire was equally restricted by the elective bodies; the rights and freedoms of the Americans and the British were guaranteed by the constitutions they had adopted of their own accord; in the provinces, the role of the latter was played by the charters.

In substantiating the home rule concept, Benjamin Franklin used, in quite an original way, the theory of natural rights. In particular, he referred to the right of each nation to a social contract revisable in the event it ceased to serve the interests of the citizens. In his view, the right was exercised by the dissatisfied Britons emigrating to the New World. He was sharply critical of the idea that the settlers from Britain remained British subjects and were, therefore, covered by British laws and remained incorporated in the social system of their abandoned homeland. Franklin argued that the settlers had had to leave Britain exactly because they wished to escape from religious and political tyranny and feudal oppression. He contended that to maintain the contrary, that is, to argue that the colonists had brought over to America British laws and dependence on the hateful absolute monarchy was to deny them any common sense. Since the late 1760s, in keeping with the views he expressed, Franklin stopped referring to the Americans as Englishmen or British subjects. In 1769 he first referred to the North

American provinces as the states.

While addressing himself to past history in a drive to substantiate the Americans' primordial right to self-government, Franklin railed against historical references made with the intention to prove the contrary—that is, North America's primordial dependence on Britain. Franklin's opponents argued that the provinces' colonial dependence on London was predetermined by the indisputable fact of their having been settled by Britons. Franklin brilliantly disproved this argument in his satirical pamphlet, "An Edict of the King of Prussia." In that parody all British constitutional regulations and bourgeois freedoms were repealed on the strength of the British Isles having once been conquered by the forebears of the Prussian monarch.

Using historical arguments to substantiate the idea of home rule, Franklin created an original concept of the emergence of social relations and a political system in the colonies. To what degree is the concept true to historical reality? In the light of modern science the faults of the theory and its author's political motivation are evident. Franklin saw the process through which the colonies were formed solely as a protest against British feudalism and absolutism and overlooked the contradictory class and historical tendencies inherent in it. Moreover, he was among those patriots who compromised the historical truth by portraying provincial charters as a constitutional guarantee of the provinces' right to self-government. Many of the charters unequivocally recognized the Parliament's power over the colonies. For instance, the Charter of Pennsylvania, Franklin's native province, stipulated that taxes could be imposed on the inhabitants of the colony "with the Consent of the Proprietary, or Chief Governor, or Assembly, or by Act of Parliament in England."¹³ The patriots' opponents, for their part, also distorted history, the difference being that their interpretation of the past promoted unmistakably reactionary goals.

Benjamin Franklin persistently denied that the

British Parliament was an imperial institution. In his view, the empire was held together only by the will of the monarch. Why did he, a man of the Enlightenment, reserve that power for the King? In his case, the allegiance to the British monarch can be traced to a firm belief in the need to preserve the British Empire. Denouncing monarchical power would have meant the destruction of imperial ties rather than a reform. Until the emergence of a revolutionary situation in North America in the mid-1770s, such an approach was a sacrilege even in the eyes of the most radical patriots, Franklin included.

The idea of a federative British Empire, advanced by Franklin and soon shared by all the patriots, reflected, among other things, the deep enmity and mistrust the Americans had for the British Parliament and their belief in the good will of the King. In the 1760s-1770s the colonists associated Britain's anti-American policy with the machinations of the Parliament. The King, whose intentions did not actually differ from those of the Parliament, remained in the background. In his 1767-1768 *Letters of a Farmer in Pennsylvania* John Dickinson wrote about Parliament and ministers entering into a broad conspiracy against the Americans. The conspiracy, he held, was kept secret from the King. Dickinson's point of view was shared by many other colonists. Describing his impressions of a visit to the House of Commons in late 1768, Benjamin Rush, one of the best educated Americans at the time, referred to it as a place where the plan for the enslavement of North America first generated. In his opinion the Commons robbed the King of his power over the colonies. Patrick Henry, who stigmatized the tyrants of all times before the Virginia Assembly in May 1765, did not have the slightest doubt about the good will of the British monarch even in the middle of 1774. A long time had passed before Benjamin Franklin abandoned his belief in the good will of the King. However, while recognizing monarchic power over the North American provinces, Franklin repeatedly emphasized that it was not absolute and that

it was limited by a representative body in each of the colonies in the same way it was limited by Parliament in England.

Franklin was poignantly distressed by the American patriotic leaders being slow about approving the idea of home rule. In his 1768 foreword to the London edition of Dickinson's *Letters of a Farmer in Pennsylvania* he criticized the author for reserving the right to regulate the colonies' trade for British Parliament. He was astonished by the inconsistency of the Circular Letter drafted by Samuel Adams and issued by the Massachusetts Assembly in 1768. Along with recognizing the assembly as the sole representative of the colonists' will, the letter described British Parliament as the supreme authority in North America. In his July 1770 letter to Thomas Cushing, one of the leaders of the Massachusetts patriots, Franklin insisted that such phrases as "the supreme power of Parliament over the colonies," which in reality, did not mean anything, should no longer be used in the patriots' public statements.

It should be acknowledged that Samuel Adams was the first person in North America (where Franklin returned shortly before the War of Independence) to resolutely support the arguments advanced by the outstanding enlightener. *The Rights of the Colonists* he wrote in 1772 proved that unambiguously. A year later an article published in *Boston Gazette* called on the inhabitants of Massachusetts to "form an independent state, an American Commonwealth." The patriots ascribed the article to Samuel Adams. Governor Hutchinson, too, had no doubts about Adams. In a report he wrote to Lord Dartmouth on October 9, 1773 he stressed that Adams was "the first person that openly, in any public assembly, declared for absolute independence."¹⁴

True, Samuel Adams's strength had always lain not only in formulating bold public calls but also in resolute action which fostered the spread of patriotic sentiment to a no lesser extent than revolutionary pronouncements. In December 1773 Adams organized a daring action of protest against the British

aggressors (that was how he invariably described the English) which became known as the Boston Tea Party.

On December 17, 1773 a group of Massachusetts Sons of Liberty stealthily boarded the teaships of the East India Company anchored in Boston Harbor and threw overboard all the chests of tea they found in the holds. In response to the colonists' encroachment on the property of the King's subjects the Parliament and the Crown issued in the spring of 1774 a series of acts that in America became known as "Intolerable Acts." The British authorities declared Boston Harbor closed until the time the British merchants were compensated for the losses they had suffered. The Massachusetts Charter was practically repealed; the town assembly, which London regarded as the source of radical ideas, was forbidden to sit without the governor's special permission and the agenda of the sittings was henceforth to be determined upon by the governor. From now on the members of the Council and the Supreme Court were to be appointed by the governor. Under the "Intolerable Acts" British troops could be billeted in any house in Boston. That nullified the inviolability of the home, and the colonial administration was no longer subject to the authority of provincial courts.

In early 1774, the patriotic movement entered upon the highest stage of its development. The struggle to restore Boston in its rights became an all-American cause. The provinces were flooded with pamphlets, just as it was the case in 1764. Their authors, however, were bolder than those of the pamphlets published in 1764. They openly demanded that home rule be instituted in North America and resolutely opposed parliamentary power over the colonies. Some of the authors, including Thomas Jefferson, even criticized the King.

Early in 1774, Samuel Adams called for the immediate convocation of a Continental Congress with the purpose of uniting the patriotic movement that swept the provinces. In May 1774 an agreement among the provinces was finally achieved. The

Samuel Adams.
A portrait by
John Singleton Copfy



patriots felt that neither Massachusetts nor any other province would be able to defend its rights by itself.

Samuel Adams got the Massachusetts Assembly to consent to participate in the Congress—in his characteristic manner. On June 17 he entered the room where the lower chamber of the Massachusetts Assembly was in session, locked the door and categorically demanded that the delegates should adopt the resolution which had been kept secret until then. The resolution mandated a Massachusetts delegation to take part in the Continental Congress. Pleading indisposition, one of the representatives of the colonial administration escaped from the room and rushed to the governor. Shortly afterwards the governor's envoy appeared before the assembly with the governor's orders to immediately dissolve. Still, Adams refused to let the delegates leave the assembly hall until they approved the resolution.

When, in September 1774, Samuel Adams appeared at the session of the First Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, he was the recognized leader of the radical wing of the patriotic movement.



Battle of Lexington

The radicals were opposed by the moderates, headed by Joseph Galloway. The moderates tried to urge the Congress to set up a colonial council which would be subordinated to the British Parliament and headed by the Governor General appointed by the King. Their efforts were of no avail. As Galloway later, in 1779, testified before the British House of Commons, Samuel Adams and his party had used all ways and means to prevent his draft from being adopted and "instigated the mob" to exert pressure on the delegates. However, the radicals suffered a similar failure in their effort to have the Congress approve the idea of home rule: while the Congress resolutions considerably limited the British Parliament's powers in North America, they did not abolish them altogether. The session of the Congress ended in a compromise between the moderates and the radicals.

The events that unfolded in North America following the First Continental Congress were bringing the provinces closer to an inevitable revolutionary break with Britain. The day of the battles of Concord and Lexington—April 19, 1775—is considered to be the beginning of the War of Independence. But even when the hostilities were in full swing the leaders of the patriotic camp never thought of them in terms of

a war of independence. The Continental Congress resolutely refuted the charges of striving for independence and unswervingly pursued a policy aimed at concluding peace with England and "reconstituting" the Americans in their rights within the imperial framework. In 1775 the anticolonial doctrine was not taken beyond the home rule demand. None of the recognized patriotic ideologists was prepared to go any further.

The war of independence was a result of far-reaching socio-economic and political processes, an inevitable historical phenomenon. However, the hostilities of 1775, which eventually led to the declaration of North America's independence, were initiated by the metropolitan authorities rather than the patriots. How can one account for the fact that the patriots' leaders did not dare to accept London's challenge, tabooed the idea of independence and offered George III an olive branch (the reconciliatory petition the Continental Congress addressed to the King in the middle of 1775) at a time when the hostilities were already in full swing?

The answer, as we see it, is as follows: the stormy events of 1775, objectively aimed at severing ties between North America and Britain, had occurred before the national consciousness of the colonists matured and their leaders were ready to take revolutionary measures. James Duane, one of the recognized leaders of the moderate wing of the Continental Congress, once said that the Americans were tied up with the English by the bonds of consanguinity, common customs, beliefs, political convictions and legislative principles and that the severance of these bonds would be unnatural. This attitude, widely spread in colonial society, was shared by many delegates to the Continental Congress. The moderates were convinced that the colonies would perish unless their territory was protected by royal troops and unless they carried on trade and had industrial ties with the metropolitan country.

What was the attitude adopted in this context by the radical leaders—Jefferson, Samuel and John

Adams, and Benjamin Franklin—who might have been expected to issue a call for revolution?

A study of their views allows the conclusion that in 1775 they did not deny the possibility and even the inevitability of breaking with Britain; however, at that moment none of them was ready to advance a revolutionary doctrine. As can be seen from the letters written by Samuel Adams, whom Hutchinson accused of calling for independence as early as 1773, throughout the year 1775 he refrained from criticizing the Congress's reconciliatory policy and from characterizing any of the Congress members. Explaining his caution, he said he had no right to disclose secrets. He made no pronouncements concerning the prospects for launching an anti-British struggle, either. It is only once (in a letter dated November 4) that he "affirmed it as his opinion" that the intransigence of the King and the Colonial Administration would "necessarily produce the grandest Revolution the World has ever seen."¹⁵

In 1775 John Adams did not go any further than expressing his doubts about the possibility of reconciling with Britain. In July 1775 Benjamin Franklin, at that time already a member of the Continental Congress, wrote, in a letter to a British addressee, that by offering an olive branch to London the Americans gave Britain "one more chance, one opportunity more, of recovering the friendship of the colonies; which, however, I think she has not sense enough to embrace, and so I conclude she has lost them for ever."¹⁶ In his letter to the Virginian moderate John Randolph dated November 29, 1775, Thomas Jefferson described the rule of King George III as "an immense misfortune to the entire Empire." While assuring Randolph that there was not in the British empire a man who more cordially loved a union with Great Britain than he did, Jefferson confessed that he saw no real way of saving imperial ties.¹⁷

There were both political and psychological reasons behind the fact that none of the recognized leaders of the patriotic left wing dared to address

Thomas Paine



the Americans with an overt call for independence. Jefferson, Franklin, and both Adamses were members of the Continental Congress which had firmly set for a reconciliation with Britain. The course adopted by the Congress, as well as the need to preserve its unity in critical situations, impelled the radicals to submit to the inertia of the natural course of events.

However, there were limits to the radical leaders' caution. When, on January 3, 1776 the Americans learned about the British decision to suppress the colonies' rebellion at any cost, Samuel Adams decided to go against the Congress majority. On January 15 he informed John Adams that he had started conferring with some of the delegates on the matter of setting up a confederation and proclaiming the independence of the New England provinces if all the colonies were not yet ready for that. (Incidentally, he had succeeded in enlisting Franklin's support.) By that time, however, a passionate call for independence, addressed to entire North America, had already been sounded outside the Congress.

A pamphlet published in Philadelphia on January

Benjamin Franklin



10, 1776 brought about a revolution, as some of the contemporaries saw it, in the Americans' mind. The pamphlet, entitled *Common Sense*, was written by Thomas Paine, an Englishman, enlightener and democrat who, fleeing from persecution in his home country, arrived in North America in 1774 with a letter of recommendation from Benjamin Franklin. His pamphlet was the first to substantiate the need for an independent American state and the republican idea of effecting internal revolutionary changes in North America.

The boldness and novelty of Paine's ideas, which differed radically even from those of the most radical patriotic leaders, impelled some historians to ascribe to him a greater influence on the American Revolution than he had actually exerted. For instance, in the late 1940s Joseph Lewis argued that in 1776 none of the colonial leaders, not even Thomas Jefferson, was capable of writing the Declaration of Independence, which was adopted on July 4. He contended that Jefferson secretly entrusted the drafting of the Declaration to Thomas Paine.¹⁸ This argument might lead to the ridiculous conclusion that, unless Thomas Paine had arrived in North America in 1774, Ameri-

can independence would have never been proclaimed. Incidentally, the overwhelming majority of bourgeois historians tend to the contrary, that is, they pass over in silence the impact of Paine's revolutionary ideas. An ultrarevolutionary and an atheist in the eyes of the respectable bourgeois, Paine is not ranked by such historians with the fathers of the War of Independence. His fame is spread out among the other patriotic leaders of whom Samuel Adams is usually thought to be the foremost.

Thomas Paine's contemporaries were much fairer in assessing the impact of his revolutionary propaganda. John Adams, who tended to exaggerate his own services to his country and to belittle those of other patriots, felt that History would ascribe the leading role in the American Revolution to Thomas Paine. Edmund Randolph, a notable Virginian politician, believed that it was Paine's *Common Sense* that persuaded most of Virginia's counties to adopt resolutions on independence in May 1776. George Washington held a similar view of Thomas Paine's pamphlet.

Thomas Paine was the first patriot to reject, in his famous pamphlet, the idea of the national unity of the Americans and the British. He argued that the British had forfeited their supremacy over other nationalities in the New World and noted that in Pennsylvania, for instance, persons of British origin accounted for less than one third of the population. That is why, he contended, Britain could not be described as the motherland of the Americans; it was Europe as a whole that ought to be regarded as their motherland. In Paine's *Common Sense* the New World is portrayed as a new Babylon where people of different nationalities, coming from different parts of Europe, were mixed up and a new national entity was in the making. Paine's pamphlet stimulated, to a greater degree than any other writings of the time, the formation of the American national consciousness.

Paine ridiculed the widespread belief that the economy of the provinces would dwindle without

Britain's patronage and that the colonists were not capable to ensure a steady development of trade and industries. He argued that the advantages of maintaining economic ties with London were illusory and that the patriots should cast off their blinkers and accept the self-evident truth that American grain would sell well at any European market and that imports had to be paid for irrespective of their origin. Paine brought into sharp focus the fact that there was no advantage in the colonies' economic ties with Britain and revealed the hardships and losses inherent in the inequitable Anglo-American trade and industrial alliance.

In his pamphlet he also criticized the concept of home rule propounded by all the patriotic leaders, from Samuel Adams to Thomas Jefferson. Paine argued that ridding Parliament of imperial powers and reserving them for the King would not guarantee the Americans their rights. He disproved the widespread allegation that the aggravation of colonial oppression after 1763 resulted from a parliamentary conspiracy and that the King had nothing to do with the repressive policies. The King, he contended, would "suffer no law to be made [in America] but such as [suited] his purpose," therefore, America's being connected to Britain not through Parliament, but through the King alone, would not free it from colonial dependence.¹⁹

In Paine's *Common Sense* the critique of the Americans' belief in the good will of the King evolves into a critique of their monarchic illusions in general.

In the 18th century, when the republic was regarded as a Utopia by many representatives of the Enlightenment, Paine's effort to defend the republican ideas was an epic of ideological heroism. The fact that he was fighting against the idea of monarchy in North America, where its social base was much narrower than in Europe (there were no social estates and no gentry in the New World) does not depreciate the revolutionary impact of his *Common Sense*. On the eve of the War of Independence the patriotic camp as a whole, its radical wing included, remained

loyal to the idea of the constitutional monarchy of the British kind. The adherence of many patriots to the idea of constitutional monarchy in the context of an unprecedentedly rapid affirmation of republican ideals throughout the provinces in 1776 can be accounted for, in our view, not only by the negative attitude to republicanism but, rather, by the desire to normalize Anglo-American relations through a compromise with the King. Therefore, the patriots' acceptance of the idea of independence was the necessary prerequisite for their approval of the idea of the republic. A prerequisite, but not a guarantee. Thomas Paine aimed his pamphlet at eliminating monarchic sentiment, one of the most deeply entrenched prejudices, from the hearts and minds of the Americans and at winning them over to the republican idea.

In his critique of the monarchy as an institution, Paine used philosophical, legal and Biblical arguments (conscious of the Americans' traditional piousness, he often addressed himself to the Bible), and appealed to the common sense of the pragmatic colonists. Paine's arguments were witty and keen. Criticizing the folly of the hereditary power of a single family, he remarked that nature disapproved of it, "otherwise she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an *ass for a lion*." Tracing the genealogy of Britain's 'crowned ruffians' from the 'French bastard' William the Conqueror to 'his royal swinishness' George III, Paine proved that their so-called divine rights were nothing more than usurpation.

One of the strongest impacts of Paine's pamphlet—from the point of view of its destructive effect on the illusions cherished by the American patriots—was due to the ruthless critique of the British constitution which had been traditionally regarded by the colonists' spiritual leaders as the shrine of people's rights and liberties. Paine showed that the principles of social contract and representative government highly valued by the patriots, were not applied in Britain. Analyzing the structure of mixed government which lay in the basis of the British policy, Paine showed that two of the three pillars of this government, the

monarchy and the House of Lords, did not reflect the voters' will and were nothing but leftovers of monarchic and aristocratic tyranny. The House of Commons, the third component of mixed government, was an elective body, but experience showed that it was in no position to curb monarchic and aristocratic tyranny.

Repudiating the idea of mixed government, Paine advocated pure republic or pure democracy as an ideal political form (the three terms pertain to the 18th-century political vocabulary). In his political boldness he had no rivals even among the most advanced thinkers of Europe.

It would be certainly naive to ascribe the proclamation of the independence of the North American colonies to the miraculous effect of Paine's *Common Sense*. However, it would be a mistake not to give heed to its revolutionary effect. Samuel Adams's constant reference to Paine's pamphlet does not belittle Adams's role in bringing about the American revolution; however, the fact that he did so warns against idolizing Samuel Adams as "the father of the War of Independence" in American historical mythology. Many prominent leaders of the American patriots contributed to the preparation for the anticolonial uprising. While recognizing their important contribution we should point out that the proclamation of independence resulted from the logic of the revolutionary events brought about by the people. It was the pressure exerted by the popular masses on the provincial assemblies in the winter and spring of 1776 that impelled the patriotic leaders to set up new, revolutionary local bodies of government. The people persisted in demanding that provincial legislatures should instruct their representatives in the Continental Congress to urge full independence from Britain. On April 12, 1776, instructions to that effect were adopted by the legislature of North Carolina, on May 4, by that of Rhode Island, and on May 15 by that of Virginia. On June 7, 1776, the Virginian democrat Richard Henry Lee submitted a Resolution of Independence for the consideration of the

Congress. It was approved, together with the Declaration of Independence drafted by Thomas Jefferson, on July 4, 1776. The hour of the new state—the United States of America—had come.

A Different Face of Samuel Adams

For Samuel Adams, the Declaration of Independence was an event that crowned his political activity and drew a line under his political career. Since the beginning of the War of Independence the man who was seen as a "Machiavelli of disorder" or the future "Cromwell of America" by the American and British Tories (many of them regarded the revolution itself as "the conspiracy of Adams") was gradually edged out from the position of leadership by George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Adams. Samuel Adams, who felt at home at the town meetings in Boston, was ill at ease in the Continental Congress. Since the end of 1775 he had repeatedly asked the Massachusetts Assembly to recall him from Philadelphia, pleading poor health, old age and fatigue. At last, in the summer of 1779, he left for Boston which remained the place of his almost continuous residence until his death in 1803.

Back in Massachusetts, Samuel Adams soon found himself in the thick of things. Late in 1779, he was elected member of the lower house of the legislature. In 1781 he became the head of the Massachusetts Senate and from 1794 to 1797 he held the governor's post. His home state fully rewarded him for his services to the revolution.

In American history, the last quarter of the 18th century was a period when, following the accomplishment of the anticolonial tasks of the revolution, priority was given to the tackling of the complicated problems involved in consolidating the political, legal, social and economic structures of North American society. The events of 1776 altered the relationships that existed within the patriotic camp and "reshuffled" its

leaders in accordance with their attitude to the new tasks of the revolution. Although the terms "radicals" and "moderates" can still be applied to the different groups of patriots after 1776, it should be borne in mind that since that time these words had a different meaning. Before 1776, those who approved of home rule and, later, of independence were referred to as radicals, while those who did not go further than proposing that parliamentary prerogatives in North America be limited were described as moderates. After 1776, the word "moderates" denoted those who accepted a limited program of internal political transformations to be carried out in the interests of the middle class, especially the upper middle class. The role of the radicals now went to the group of patriots who advocated a democratic program of economic and socio-political change. At this point the terms "radicals" and "democrats" became identical in their meaning.

The revolution was in full swing. Many of the patriots, oblivious, as it were, of external danger, were fully absorbed in restructuring the executive and legislative branches of government, reorganizing legal proceedings and redistributing the land confiscated from the Loyalists. As for the lower classes and the radicals, they saw the chief aim of the revolution in establishing full political equality and social justice. They firmly believed that the elimination of colonial oppression was to be followed by the elimination of the economic and political privileges of the local higher-ups.

The Pennsylvania radicals, who had gained positions of influence in the committee charged to draft the state constitution, declared: "An enormous proportion of property vested in a few individuals is dangerous to the rights, and destructive of the common happiness of mankind; and therefore every free state hath a right to discourage possession of such property."²⁰ (This paragraph of the draft was not accepted by the convention.)

In Massachusetts, an outcry was raised against the accumulation of wealth and monopolization of pub-

lic offices by a minority as that could lead to the dangerous growth of the influence and authority of the elite. An anonymous writer in the *Boston Gazette* declared that "liberty, the source and pillar of all true property [could] not be preserved in society while the members [possessed] it unequally." In New Hampshire a crowd of four hundred armed men surrounded the legislature and demanded "an equal distribution of property." A Rhode Island newspaper reported that the state legislature was expected to consider a bill on the periodical redistribution of property among the citizens. In Connecticut, a member of the legislative assembly was reported as saying that sound government was impossible without citizens' certain equality in terms of property.²¹

Just as was the case before the revolution, the most radical egalitarian demands were advanced in the western regions. The convention of Kentucky, the western part of Virginia which expressed its wish to become a separate state, adopted a resolution which declared that the allocation of more land to a person than he could cultivate alone or with the help of his family was evil. In the opinion of the authors of the resolution, concentration of large acreages in the hands of individual owners jeopardized the fundamental principles of free republican rule.²²

Proportional taxation was one of the most widespread demands incorporated in the lower classes' platform. It aimed at preventing the accumulation of excessive wealth in the hands of the few. On the eve of the revolution more than 250 small farmers in Anson County in the west of North Carolina signed a petition insisting that taxation be made proportional to the income derived from real estate. Shortly afterwards, the voters from Orange and Roane demanded that the constitutional convention should introduce proportional taxation. They especially insisted on imposing an additional tax on the "living property" of the slaveowners. The prominent democrat Richard Henry Lee, an advocate of proportional taxation, stressed that the practice of equal distribution of taxes among the various social groups in North America

played into the hands of speculators and monopolists and was pernicious to the vast majority of "honest, industrious men."²³

The most frequent demand in the platforms of the mass movements in the revolutionary era was for unlimited issue of paper money to be accepted at nominal value. The call for "cheap money" was the leitmotif of the economic demands put forward by the owners of small-commodity-producing and subsistence farms as well as the urban lower classes whose debts had grown immensely during the war. Increasingly large-scale emission of paper money and the ensuing inflation suited the rural and urban debtors because if paper money was accepted, in accordance with the cheap money doctrine, at nominal value they could cover their debts with depreciated or, as the creditors put it, "dishonest money."

The call for "cheap money" may seem moderate and insignificant today, but in the 18th century it made the American moneybags panic. The upper classes saw it as a monstrous instrument for redistributing wealth in favor of the poor and for reducing their riches proportional to the reduction in the gold and silver content of money. At the end of the revolution, seven of the thirteen American states passed legislation on the unlimited issue of paper money to be accepted by the creditors at nominal value. The measure was perceived as a revolt against property by the rich planters and bourgeoisie.

In their view, what the grassroots patriots aspired for could only lead to disorder and anarchy. Robert Livingston, one of the richer patriots, prophesied that the struggles waged by the lower classes would bring about the disruption of law, order and government in the provinces and result in violence against the propertied classes. Gouverneur Morris, alarmed by the news that a group of needy patriots had broken into the house of a certain Mr. Wilson, a person of his circle, a moderate patriot and one of the richest men in Philadelphia, warned that the wrath of the

crowd was changing its direction and about to descend upon "our own heads, and not those of our foes." The mob, the dirty reptiles, he raged, had started to think and act. As early as June 1775, the Massachusetts Provincial Assembly expressed, in a message to the Continental Congress, its concern over the fact that some people had forfeited respect for the sanctity of private property. A year later, John Adams noted that the leveller spirit and the desire for innovation were reaching their height.

It is in the political rather than the socio-economic field that the popular masses and the democrats scored the most impressive successes. Following the proclamation of independence the thirteen North American provinces were swept by a "constitutional boom." As one of the patriots put it, constitutions employed "every pen."²⁴ The point is that in the early years of the War of Independence the patriotic leaders least of all thought about consolidating the vast continent under a single national government. They were convinced that the thirteen states would remain a confederation of states with independent governments. For this reason their efforts were concentrated on drafting state constitutions.

The will of the community of citizens was recognized as the sole legitimate source of the constitution which embodied, in the eyes of the patriots, the idea of social contract. Representatives of the revolution's democratic wing repeatedly stressed that constitutional laws should not be adopted by an act of Parliament or judicial bodies as was the case in Britain. At the beginning of the War of Independence, American democratic thought was dominated by the idea that a constitution could only be adopted by the direct expression of the voters' will.

That the voters should be entitled not only to ratify the constitution but also to formulate final judgment on any bill was one of the democratic ideas that became widespread during the American Revolution. Consonant with the doctrine of inalienability and indivisibility of the people's sovereignty advanced by

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the leading democratic thinker of 18th-century Europe, it was denoted as "pure" or, less often, "direct" democracy in the writings and pronouncements on the constitution in the days of the American Revolution. Among the attributes of direct democracy was popular referendum, the right to recall deputies, and voters' instructions to the deputies.

The idea of direct democracy was strongly opposed by the moderate patriots who approved of representative government only. It also failed to gain the support of such democrats as Thomas Paine and Benjamin Rush who argued that the only form of democracy attainable in large countries was representative democracy. They warned their compatriots against following blindly the example of the ancient Greek city-states. However, Paine and Rush, like most other patriots, were convinced that a constitution ought not to be drafted, approved or amended by a usual legislative assembly and that the right to do so must be reserved for extraordinary constitutional conventions. The moderates failed to bury this idea. That they made a concession in this case is unequivocally borne out by the fact that the draft of the Federal Constitution of 1787 was submitted for ratification to the extraordinary conventions of the states. The democratic principle triumphed and the draft of the Federal Constitution, which had been prepared by the moderate Founding Fathers in great secrecy, without letting the people share in the effort, was strongly criticized by many of the state conventions. More than half of them declared they would only approve of the Constitution if it was supplemented with a Bill of Rights.

Many of the states had their constitutions drafted by specially elected assemblies and not by the usual legislatures. Already during the first year of the revolution new republican constitutions were approved in most of the states. That the colonial charters were replaced by republican constitutions signalled a break with the prerevolutionary political system in many important respects. Having adopted their

constitutions, the North American provinces turned into bourgeois republican states. Henceforth all their government bodies were to be elected: mixed government was relinquished and its non-elective monarchic and aristocratic branches went out of existence.

The prerevolutionary form of the separation of power was drastically revised in the state constitutions. As distinct from mixed government which envisaged the distribution of power among various social forces, the separation of powers implied independent exercise of executive, legislative and judicial power. The three branches of power were to control and balance one another by means of a system of checks and balances. During the colonial period the system actually served to place executive power atop the other branches of power.

The constitutions adopted by the states changed the prerevolutionary practices, resulting in the maximum weakening of executive power and elevating legislative power. Some of the patriots, mistrustful of executive power which they identified with the monarchical branch of government, suggested abolishing it altogether. Although most patriots were not prepared for such a radical approach to the governors' authority, there could be no doubt about their negative or strongly critical attitude to it. Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Hampshire and South Carolina refused to apply the title of governor to the head of executive power and decided to describe him in their constitutions as "president." All the states, with the sole exception of South Carolina, rejected the principle of indivisible power which had been applied in the political practice of the American provinces in the colonial period. The constitutions adopted by American states in the first year of the revolution advanced an opposite principle, that of collective executive power. Each state set up an executive council, and the governor, or the president, was now nothing more than its chairman. The Pennsylvanians outstripped all the other states in belittling the role of the head of executive power: they declared the

president of the council to be "the first among equals."

The American governors of the colonial period controlled the activity of elective assemblies through exercising the right to absolute veto. Most of the state constitutions adopted during the revolution deprived executive authorities of both absolute and limited veto power and abolished the classical system of checks and balances. Depriving the executive office of the right to restrain legislative assemblies, the state constitutions relegated many traditional functions of the executive branch to the legislature. Among those functions was the right to declare war, conclude peace, appoint public servants (including the members of executive councils, the treasurer, the attorney general and the judges), raise the army, run international affairs, conclude treaties, grant pardon, etc.

Most of the states elected their governor for the shortest possible, one-year term; only in three states—Pennsylvania, Delaware and New York—the head of executive power was elected once in three years; in South Carolina elections were held every two years. Most of the states limited the right of a person to be re-elected head of executive power.

Granting broad prerogatives to the elective assembly (legislative authority) the state constitutions reserved the dominant role within the assemblies for the lower houses. As a result, the policy of the North American states displayed a tendency to evolve toward what was described in the 18th-century constitutional teachings as "pure democracy" (the democratic branch of mixed government was the only one to retain its relevance).

What was Samuel Adams's attitude to democratic innovation? Alas, he, just as many other patriotic leaders who had adhered to a radical stand in the anticolonial movement, was unable to accept the democratic socio-political program of the American Revolution. Neither was it accepted by John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry and most other patriotic leaders. Samuel Adams proved to be not up

to it, either. His evolution after 1776, which revealed his new or, to be more exact, his other face, was overlooked by many of his American biographers, including such an authority as Vernon L. Parrington.

Samuel Adams's moderate and, in some respects, overtly conservative position with regard to internal political change was brought into sharp focus during the discussion and adoption of the Massachusetts constitution in 1779-1780. The drafting of the constitution was entrusted to John Adams. However, it is well known that he produced it with his cousin's generous assistance. The result was the most moderate constitution of all adopted during the American Revolution. It was actually the first attempt at a Thermidorian revision of the constitutional practice of the early years of the revolution, practice which was consonant with many of the democratic aspirations of the masses. (In certain respects, John Adams's draft laid the foundation for the Federal Constitution of 1787.) The property qualification it fixed for the voters was twice that laid down by the colonial charter that had been abolished by the revolution. The state constitution re-established the two-chamber legislature of the colonial period. The Constitutional Convention's message to the voters stated that "the House was to speak for all the people of the Commonwealth, the Senate for its virtue and wisdom, as measured by property."²⁵

Samuel Adams unconditionally approved of this and all the other provisions of the Massachusetts constitution which he considered to be a truly republican constitution. He interpreted the concept of republicanism from the point of view of a moderate rather than a democrat. What he especially liked about the Massachusetts constitution was that it guaranteed the property rights of the "worthy citizens" the preservation of which was the great goal of the political community. As he saw it, the purpose of two-chamber government was to "check the human passions."²⁶

At first sight, Adams's stand after 1776 was dif-

ferent from his prerevolutionary attitude to the popular masses. In fact, there was no contradiction between his pre- and postrevolutionary attitudes. Prior to 1776, Adams championed the bourgeois rights and freedoms suppressed by Britain and its American henchmen. In those days, he was prepared to rely on the masses in the struggle for these principles. However, after 1776, the bourgeois principles were threatened by the American lower classes. Samuel Adams opposed any limitation of bourgeois rights, especially the primary bourgeois right to freely dispose of and accumulate private property, both prior and after 1776. As early as 1768, he commented on the issue in most unambiguous terms: "Property is admitted to have an existence, even in the savage state of nature... And if property is necessary for the support of savage life, it is by no means less so in civil society. The Utopian schemes of levelling, and a community of goods, are as visionary and impracticable, as those which vest all property in the Crown, are arbitrary, despotic, and in our government unconstitutional."²⁷

Samuel Adams's rejection of egalitarian principles predetermined his attitude to the egalitarian aspirations of the masses in the years of the American Revolution. In 1782, he condemned the Massachusetts poor who demanded that the legislators defer the payment of debts. He was frankly undemocratic in his attitude to the Shays Rebellion which in 1786-1787 swept several counties in Massachusetts. Adams used his influence in the Boston town assembly to compel the loyal citizens to adopt a petition to the governor calling on him to immediately quench the mutiny. He portrayed the poor rallied around Daniel Shays as "English emissaries." In his capacity as chairman of the Senate he railed against the lower house of the Massachusetts legislature for opposing the decision to suppress the uprising by force. On February 5, 1787, he demanded that the legislature request the Federal Government to suppress the uprising. His resolution was approved, although many members of the state assembly questioned the legality of the

Continental Congress's interference in the affairs of a sovereign state.

Samuel Adams, formerly an enthusiastic supporter and tireless organizer of revolutionary societies, spontaneous meetings and independent political institutions, now protested against any actions that were not sanctioned by the authorities. In 1784, explaining his change of position, Adams, now a representative of the powers that be, wrote "...now we have regular and constitutional Governments, popular Committees and County Conventions are not only useless but dangerous. They served an excellent Purpose and were highly necessary when they were set up. I shall not repent the small Share I then took in them."²⁸

The decline in the mass popular movements in the late 1780s and the consolidation of new, bourgeois-planter power served to diminish the conservative features in Samuel Adams's political make-up. The political moderation that was typical of him in his old age was quite different from the conservative antidemocratism of John Adams. In the 1790s, in his letters to John Adams, whose conservative attitudes, just as those of all the moderate Founding Fathers, became much more conspicuous in connection with the French Revolution, he protested against John's idea of elitist rule by the natural and continuous aristocracy. Neither did he share John Adams's idea that power was only partially vested in the people and that supreme political sovereignty should be alienated in favor of hereditary aristocracy. On the whole, unlike John Adams, Samuel Adams was quite satisfied with the state-legal principles of the Federal Constitution. He regarded John Adams's natural and enduring aristocracy as an excess not only because he had always resolutely opposed the system of social estates characteristic of feudal society but also because in his view the American Federal Constitution of 1787 was a sufficiently effective mechanism for checking the "inordinate passions" of the people.

To sum up, Samuel Adams's place in the formation

of the United States of America was primarily determined by the leading role he played in organizing and educating the patriotic forces in the period preceding the War of Independence. In his view, the revolution fulfilled its function through attaining the anticolonial goals. Following the proclamation of independence the leading role in determining North America's future was taken over by other political figures.

Chapter Three

ALEXANDER HAMILTON: PROPHET OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

Hamilton has both critics and apologists among his biographers, but the latter are in the majority. The apologists portray Hamilton¹ as an outstanding spokesman of the national ideals that have no class motives whatsoever. Was it not Hamilton, the apologists exclaim, who ushered in strong federal government, manufactories and banks, and the national grandeur of the USA? Broadus Mitchell sees Hamilton's negative attitude to the rights of states and his strong belief in a unitary state as a desire for effective organization and careful planning. Gilbert Lycan calls him a friend of the small farmer. Richard Morris describes Hamilton as the harbinger of a state of general prosperity and all but the precursor of Keynesian state-monopoly regulation, which the American historian regards as regulation in the interests of all classes.²

His critics' attitude is contradictory, Woodrow Wilson putting that contradiction in a nutshell thus: "A very great man, but not a great American" (US President at the start of the century and a self-proclaimed defender of the small man, Wilson meant that a great American must also be a proponent of democracy). Hamilton's critical biographers differ: some strongly deny his political actions while others accept them with qualifications.

Saul Padover, author of many very superficial biographies of great Americans and Europeans, sees Hamilton as an evil genius of America. In a

comparative biography of Jefferson and Hamilton, Claude Bowers supports the view, popularly held in the US, that everything good in that country is due to the former, and everything bad—to the latter.³ The judgements of Padover and Bowers are based on moral maxims and do not take into consideration the real requirements of US development in the last third of the 18th century.

Nathan Schachner, Vernon Louis Parrington and John Miller⁴ are from another group of critics. They are astonished at Hamilton's great deeds and show that he was the first in the USA resolutely to renounce parochial prejudices and defense of the interests of one's own state, and to take a firm national standpoint. But, paradoxically, these critics state, Hamilton's concern for the nation did not benefit ordinary Americans in any way: only the money bosses benefited. This "great man," unfortunately, was contemptuous of the people and democracy and relied on the rich in carrying out his transformations. Parrington, Miller and Schachner appear to be people who believe, or want to believe, that in bourgeois America government affairs can be conducted in the interests of the people rather than the rich.

The latest noteworthy work on Hamilton was Julian Boyd's book, which has the sensational title *Number 7. Alexander Hamilton's Secret Attempts to Control American Foreign Policy*.⁵ Boyd, who has authored many works on Jefferson and compiled many volumes of his papers, found documents exposing the cynical morals of the antagonist of his hero democrat. It came to light that from 1789 Hamilton maintained friendly relations with the Englishman Major Beckwith, who, in the absence of diplomatic representation of the British monarch in the USA, carried out secret service missions for his country (in so doing he made contact with many American political leaders, kept dossiers on all statesmen and designated them simply by ciphers in his reports to his superiors: Secretary of War Knox—No. 4, Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton—No. 7, Chief Justice Jay—No. 12, etc.). Hamilton was quite free with

Beckwith's information (the Englishman did not know this but would not have minded had he found out) and shamelessly misled Washington and Jefferson regarding the real intentions of the British authorities with respect to the USA. He deceived them as if he were dealing with small bankers rather than with the President and Secretary of State, the aim being simply to impose a pro-British policy on the country and destroy the friendship with France. And he got what he wanted: in 1794 Jay journeyed to London and signed a treaty with Britain which insulted American national feelings but was in keeping with Hamilton's pragmatic designs.

Arguments about Hamilton among American historians bear little resemblance to academic discussion, and there is good reason for this: Hamilton's ideas on government and the objectives of socio-economic policy have something in common with present-day American ideological views and remain part and parcel of the ideological struggle in the 20th-century USA.

Hamilton's political evolution from the start of the fight against Britain to the establishment of the domination of the bourgeois-planter bloc reflected the changes in the political line of the moneylending and commercial bourgeoisie as a whole. It was his sensitivity to the bourgeoisie's changing class needs that made Hamilton its political and ideological leader. As to the unattractive features of his personality, it is perhaps they which enabled Hamilton, who had neither the background nor the ties that fate had given Washington and Jefferson, rapidly to climb to the crest of power. And the drive for power was the principal passion of his life.

Washington's Aide-de-Camp

Americans know that Hamilton was a framer of the country's constitution and theoretically substantiated it in *The Federalist*, that he was the first US Secretary of the Treasury, established the Bank

of the United States and bossed the show in Washington's government. For most of them Hamilton begins from the moment he set foot on the American continent in October 1772; few are interested in his earlier life. American historians write very little and much the same about it, differing only in their description of the landscape and climate of the British West Indian island of Nevis where one of the US Founding Fathers was born on January 11, 1755.⁶ Information about Hamilton's young years in the West Indies is scant but interesting and important since it sheds light on the formation of the uncommon personality of the future Federalist leader.

The circumstances of Hamilton's birth were more than once the subject of mockery and ridicule among bourgeois and plantocratic families of North America, which had adopted the morals, habits and prejudices of aristocratic England. He was begot of adultery and, in the eyes of American snobs and bigots, was "illegitimate" (John Adams, who could not stand Hamilton, called him behind his back "the bastard brat of a Scots peddler").

One of Hamilton's sons touched up his father's birth history in his memoirs, stating that Rachel Lavine, the mother of Alexander Hamilton, divorced her first husband and married her second before the appearance of her famous offspring, and that his father was legitimate, as befits a gentleman. The truth was quite different.

In 1754 the young Rachel, daughter of a Huguenot, secretly left her old and repellent spouse, a Danish Jew named John Michael Lavine, and went to a neighboring island in the West Indies. Left with a four-year-old son called Peter, Lavine sued his young wife, claiming that she had gone to Barbados to indulge in debauchery.

Rachel had indeed gone to Barbados, but she did not stay there long, soon leaving for Nevis, where her mother and sisters lived. It was there that the 20-year-old beauty captivated a man of the same age, James Hamilton, son of poor Scottish gentry. Rachel had neither the money, the influence nor substan-

tial grounds for divorce under strict British law (parliamentary permission was required), and the young lovers started to live together violating Christian morals.

This union for love brought Rachel no more happiness than had marriage for gain. James Hamilton, who had come to the West Indies to test his abilities, was an outright failure. First he and his partners went bankrupt in a simple trade operation, then James tried to set up his own business but quickly wasted the small sum of money Rachel had gotten from her mother. After that there was nothing for it but to go and manage a plantation belonging to his wife's relative. But there, too, he was a failure. In 1763 James Hamilton gave up everything as lost, boarded a ship sailing from Nevis, and disappeared, sending no word whatsoever to Rachel and his two sons.

As an adult, Alexander Hamilton never disowned his father and even once tried to establish contact with him. He also attempted to contact the Scottish Hamiltons. The simple explanation for this behavior on the part of a person who came to be known in America as a proud and ambitious man is that the family coat of arms was for him a pass into the influential homes of North America, where background was everything. For Hamilton loyalty to his father meant preserving ties with his aristocratic Scottish clan, whose ancient roots were a source of pride with him.

An inconsolable Rachel, left alone with two children, having both a legal and a common-law husband, and harassed by Lavine's lawsuits (possessed by an urge for revenge, Lavine had been able to win her last property, three black servants, in court), did not last long: she died in 1768 at the age of 32. Thirteen-year-old Alexander's relatives got him a job in the office of Nicholas Cruger, a rich merchant.

His living conditions soon taught Hamilton to rely in everything on industry and enterprise. He had more than a fair share of intelligence and varied abilities, and stimulated by diligence, they mani-



King's College in New York

festated themselves very rapidly. Just two or three years after he began to work for Cruger the head of the firm began to entrust independent trade operations to Hamilton. He became so skilled at accounting that later, as Secretary of the Treasury, he easily rebuffed attempts by Jefferson's supporters to accuse him of corruption. In his spare time the young Hamilton avidly read works by authors of old which came into his hands and developed the literary bent that he discovered he had in addition to the talents of a financier. On October 3, 1772 one of the island's newspapers published his story about a man caught in a storm in the open sea. The governor himself took an interest in the author and it was decided to encourage his talent. At the end of October 1772, Hamilton, armed with letters of recommendation to wealthy New York families, landed in Boston. In-

fluent patrons sent him for a year to a private school in New Jersey, and in 1773 Hamilton excelled in examinations for King's College in New York (later Columbia University). He was to remain connected with that city for the rest of his life.

The young King's College student not only learned the various sciences well but also discussed politics better than others. For the colonists political problems had for the past 10 years consisted of a single topic—relations with Britain. Without hesitation Hamilton adopted the Americans' viewpoint in their dispute with the mother country.

In the fall of 1774 the Loyalists in North America were extremely worried. They regarded the recent decision of the Continental Congress as an encroachment on the foundations of the empire and the supreme power of the monarch. New York conservative Samuel Seabury, a well-known priest and future Bishop of Connecticut, had long earned a reputation as one of the most sophisticated defenders of the interests of the British Crown in North America. And no sooner had the congressmen left Philadelphia than the reverend shared with the colonists in the form of a pamphlet his ideas on the Congress decisions. A past master at scholastic debate, the theologian dug up dusty doctrines of absolutism from 17th-century ideological archives and demanded that the colonists continue to trust in the sovereign will of the monarch in everything.

New York patriots did not have to wait long for a response to Seabury. On December 15 they read and passed on a pamphlet justifying the Congress measures. The author did not reveal his name but everything indicated that he was a gifted and experienced pamphleteer. These New Yorkers soon found out to their surprise that the pamphlet had been written by a young King's College student named Alexander Hamilton who had previously been little known among the patriots.

Hamilton had acted bravely in writing pamphlets for the patriots. Voluntarily or not, he had entered into a kind of competition with the best minds of

the colonies and, in addition, had decided to argue with one of Britain's most sophisticated supporters in North America. Hamilton successfully passed this intellectual test: both his first and second (on February 23, 1775) pamphlets favoring freedom of the provinces were well received.

Hamilton made his debut in pamphlet writing at a time when there were two competing trends among American critics of British colonial domination: the moderate and the radical. The differences between them were not based on the question of separation from Britain: up to the beginning of 1776 the moderates and the radicals were merely arguing about the limits of Britain's power in North America.

The moderates recognized the sole and indivisible authority of the British Parliament and Crown in the British Empire and therefore also its supremacy with respect to the rights of North American provincial assemblies; they only urged that the "august parliament" guarantee North Americans British constitutional rights and freedoms.

The radicals, on the other hand, rejected the authority of the mother country's parliament in the provinces and demanded home rule. This was also favored by Hamilton, whose pamphlets repeated the concept of home rule like a refrain.

A feature of Hamilton was his broad use of the doctrines of West European bourgeois ideologists of the 17th and 18th centuries, while pamphleteers of previous years had tried to find the basis for Americans' rights mainly in provincial charters or in historical tradition.

The impact of the West European Enlightenment on American patriots is irrefutable, though some US historians deny it. British colonial domination in North America made use of many forms and methods typical of Western absolutism. It was natural on the part of the patriots' leaders to turn to the ideas of West European ideologists who had long theoretically substantiated the needs of bourgeois development, the very needs which Britain was suppressing in the colonies.

In the mid-1770s the attempts by the colonists' ideologists to use references to local charters (Samuel Adams's favorite method) or facts from the history of the provinces (Franklin's preferred method) to prove the supremacy of the assemblies and the incompetence of Parliament proved unsound. Trying to outdo each other in being of service to London, their opponents dug up the provincial annals, studied all the charters and got from the archive dust and legal codes arguments which drove the patriots into a corner. It was brought to light that the pretensions of the Lords and Commons to government of the colonies had a basis in both the traditions and charters of the country. Seabury, for one, was able to establish this using the history and legal documents of the colony of New York.

The principal feature of the theories of West European ideologists of the bourgeoisie which Hamilton used to defend the interests of Americans was rejection of the authority of written laws and customs and recognition of only rationally introduced principles of a just organization of society. Hamilton made skillful use of the theory of natural rights, which regarded all customs and legal acts as useless as soon as they ceased to be in keeping with the laws of God the creator and nature. The 20-year-old youth rebuked doctor of theology Seabury as a careless schoolboy for ignoring this truth. In the spirit and style of West European teachers he dismissed Seabury's carefully collected historical and legal facts confirming London's "right" to dictate to the province of New York: "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for, among old parchments, or dusty records. They are written, as with a sun beam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the divinity itself; and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power."

Compositions by the young Hamilton were full of sincerity and nobleness. But how long would they be enough for a youth dreaming of success and power?

When military operations started, Hamilton imme-

diately offered his services to the new revolutionary power. On March 1, 1776 the New York legislature awarded Hamilton the rank of captain of the artillery and confirmed him in the post of battalion commander. Displaying extraordinary energy, the young captain soon assembled a command of 68. They led a monotonous life until military operations neared New York. Some soldiers were on duty outside the state archive, which was under Hamilton's guard, while most of the recruits learned the fine points of ceremonial step on the nearest parade ground. When the legislature was sure that the artillery command was carrying out its mission well, it risked giving it a more complicated one: Hamilton's battalion began to guard the coast.

On July 12, 1776, Captain Hamilton, tired of waiting for action, finally saw British ships on the horizon entering the Hudson. His command swiftly readied the guns for combat and, as soon as the ships were within shooting distance, discharged a volley. The effect sent the battalion into a state of shock: one of the guns was blown to bits, the two loaders writhing in agony beside it. In an effort to keep spirits from falling, Hamilton looked hopefully at the enemy vessels. Another disappointment! They were unharmed. Fortunately the British crew merely shelled the town and then turned their ships around.

On August 9 Hamilton's battalion joined the army of the Continental Congress. Following a crushing defeat in September, Washington's troops left New York. Hamilton's command shared the painful retreat of the army when each day looked like being its last. Fortune smiled on it at the end of 1776: following two successful battles the British pursuit force fell back and the army had before it a long winter stay in the hills of Morristown. It was time to count what had been lost over the three months. That was easy for Hamilton to do: no more than 30 soldiers were left in his battalion, barely enough to operate the two remaining guns.

Hamilton's worries about replenishing his battalion were interrupted one March day in 1777 by

a sudden invitation from the Commander in Chief to become one of his aides-de-camp, the recommendation having come from General Greene who knew Hamilton. The young captain was flattered by the proposal, for Washington took into his "family," as he called the aides-de-camp, only gentlemen from distinguished families with refined manners that pleased the aristocratic tastes of the Virginian planter. Hamilton was glad for the opportunity to enter the circle which, it seemed, had been barred to him by the circumstances of his birth (he did not enlarge on those circumstances). Hamilton immediately agreed to take up the post which had so many advantages.

For a start Washington invested him, as he did all "family" members, with the high rank of lieutenant-colonel, then gradually introduced him to a range of direct duties. Hamilton became chief of Washington's office and on his behalf corresponded with the country's political leaders, businessmen and many others, who were fairly large in number.

Every evening, even if only briefly, he met with the Commander in Chief to go through the day's correspondence and draft replies. Hamilton's new duties made him one of Washington's closest and most trusted people, but it would be an exaggeration to try to present him in the role of the Gray Cardinal of the Commander in Chief (as Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton often played this role successfully under Washington, the country's President). The man commanding the armed forces of the young republic could not stand to be prompted even by his favorites. Hamilton's task as lieutenant-colonel was correctly to grasp the general's main ideas, develop them in the necessary direction on paper, inventing convincing arguments while so doing, and set it all out elegantly. Washington liked how the new aide-de-camp executed delicate commissions.

The young lieutenant-colonel, who at times longed for the smell of powder, was also given combat missions. But not too often. Washington had many other aides to do that kind of work. Henry Cabot Lodge, one of Hamilton's first biographers, who



Nicholas Cruger

wrote enthusiastically about his hero, believed that he carried out only one important mission outside the range of his direct duties. One of the people who envied Washington—General Gates, who operated in the north of the country—won a victory over the British at Saratoga in October 1777. The Commander in Chief, for whom things were not going well in the south, sent Hamilton to Gates for help. Hamilton fulfilled his mission, but so zealously that when Gates found, after the young lieutenant-colonel had left, that a letter from Conway calling him a genius and Washington a dullard was missing, he decided right away that Washington's aide-de-camp had taken it (Gates later found out that his own aide-de-camp was responsible for the loss of the letter).⁸

Hamilton's biographers who wrote after Lodge tried to do their bit for the feats of arms of this Founding Father, but they appear very ordinary and quite forgettable even in the most colorful descriptions. However, there are other aspects and episodes from the aide-de-camp period of Hamilton's life which do draw attention. First of all, during those years he, more than any other army officer, became intimate with the most influential people of America.



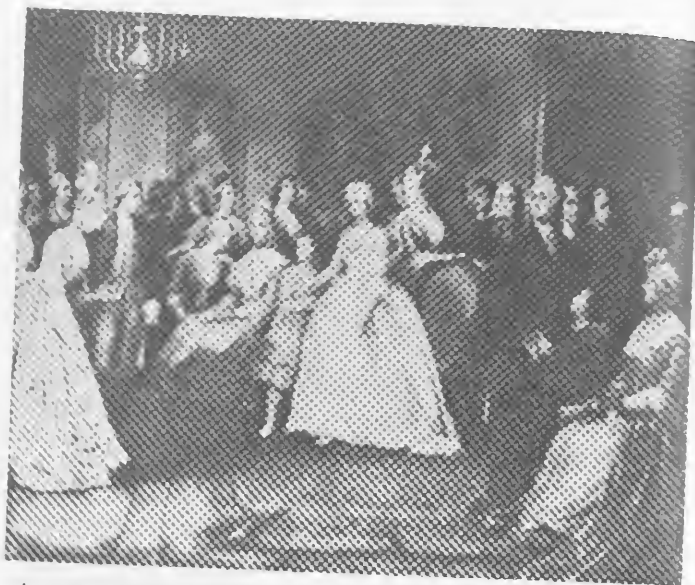
Coming into contact with them initially on behalf of Washington, Hamilton very soon started to correspond personally with many of them, including James Duane, Governor and Robert Morris, Robert Livingston, Philip Schuyler, and John Jay, who represented the moneyed and political elite of the young American Republic. Washington's aide-de-camp willingly shared with them his political ideas (some of his letters in the late 70s, among them those to Governor Morris on the draft constitution of New York state and one to Duane analyzing the Articles of Confederation, were real political treatises). Reading these letters, which gave detailed and precise social and political characterizations and recommendations that fully and accurately reflected bourgeois interests, they could not but think: "Now there's the man needed to run the country." And by the end of the 70s Hamilton's name was often on the lips of leaders of the New York legislative assembly and the Continental Congress whenever they had to fill important political vacancies.

The acquaintanceship which most affected Hamilton's future began during one of the long fall and winter camps of the American Army. Battles and military operations were succeeded by much longer

periods of rest. High-ranking civilians often visited Washington's headquarters during the days, weeks and months that the army was recovering its strength, and on those occasions the Commander in Chief always hosted a dinner which was also attended by patriotic ladies. One guest recalled the day after one such reception that for the first time he had had the pleasure of seeing Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton: the latter was seated centrally among many guests that included one or two Misses Livingstons and a Miss Brown. The lieutenant-colonel acted naturally, introducing himself informally and chatting with every one. These meals at the Commander in Chief's also helped to strengthen Hamilton's ties with the family of General Schuyler, of which he himself was soon to become a member.

Fate had not been unkind to Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton but he felt that he had a right to expect much more than a life as aide-de-camp to the Commander in Chief. However, one circumstance could present a serious obstacle to his entering the elite of the young republic—his background. He quickly realized that without celebrity and wealth he was doomed to remain a second class person in the eyes of the high-born and propertied families of America. Hamilton more and more often thought about how to eliminate this "defect" in his biography. And, because he began to plague his friends with ideas about the ideal life companion, they realized that the lieutenant-colonel had chosen the easiest and soundest means of achieving this aim. He did not dissemble in defining the good points which his chosen one should have. Talking to his close friend John Laurence, he stipulated one in particular: the larger the dowry the better. General Schuyler's daughter Elizabeth could hardly be reproached for not meeting this stipulation.

The Schuylers, the van Rensselaers, the van Cortlandts and the Livingstons were the four richest and most influential clans in New York. Philip Schuyler had inherited large estates and a profitable business from his parents, and had multiplied his wealth and



A reception at George Washington's to honor Hamilton and his bride

strengthened the family blood line by marrying the daughter of van Rensselaer (van Rensselaer's land holdings were equal to two-thirds the territory of the colony of Connecticut which neighbored on New York). After the start of the War of Independence, when the Continental Congress began to hand out ranks, keeping claimants' ambitions strictly in proportion to the quantity of their property, Philip Schuyler was given the title of major-general confirming his lofty place in the hierarchy of the young republic. Hamilton liked the idea of a bride from the Schuyler-van Rensselaer family which had been strengthened by independence. On December 14, 1780 he married Elizabeth, the younger Schuyler daughter. His political ties with the elite of the American Republic were thus reinforced by a tangible personal union, and Hamilton searched even more zealously for ways to secure the interests of property owners since his own success was now directly dependent on the firmness of their positions.

Hamilton's evolution during the War of Independence reflected his understanding of the bourgeois objectives of the revolution. What is more, he was often the first, or one of the first, to substantiate those objectives.

Some time after the beginning of the revolution the general democratic upsurge in America also affected Hamilton to a certain extent but some radical pronouncements of his during that period, ones which he later renounced altogether, did not mean that he was in solidarity with the masses' democratic onslaught against the country's political mechanism. The only thing that can definitely be said about his position in the initial period of American independence is that Hamilton had not yet turned rightward from his stance on the eve of the revolution.

The masses' striving for reform at the start of the revolution included an intention to get rid of the aristocratic principles that determined the colonies' political system. For example, there were general attempts to replace bicameral legislative power, under which the upper house was not set up democratically, with a unicameral one, and also to expand suffrage, reduce the deputies' term of office, and hold direct elections. These attempts were successful in some places. A unicameral system of legislative power was established in 1776 in Pennsylvania, an example which the democrats in Hamilton's home state of New York also wanted to follow.

In 1777, Governor Morris, a New York politician, informed Hamilton with alarm about a draft state constitution that was being prepared for discussion. He was displeased because the draft reduced the role of the chief executive who, unlike the governor of colonial times, would be elected rather than appointed, and on the basis of direct and not two-stage elections at that. In Morris's view the swallowing of power by democracy was also expressed in the attempt to replace bicameral government with a unicameral one.

Hamilton dared to disagree with Morris on one

Elizabeth Schuyler



point, speaking in favor of unicameral organization of legislative power in his answering letter. Ten years later, when the Federal Constitution was being adopted, Hamilton regarded the upper house, the Senate, as the main institution for safeguarding the interests of the dominant minority from encroachments by the majority. But in 1777 he believed that the creation of a Senate in New York, as Morris wanted, would jeopardize the principle of popular consensus for the Senate would rapidly develop into a purely aristocratic body.⁹

Some of Hamilton's biographers write about his progressive pronouncements early in the revolution regarding the black slaves. The reason why Washington's aide-de-camp spoke out on the problem, which was a burning one at that time, is that units of the Continental Congress Army operating in the South were obviously in need of reinforcement. Where were reinforcements to be had? Hamilton reached what seemed to him a brilliant solution: replenish the army with black slaves, promising them freedom for good service. It was then that Hamilton declared, "The contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks, makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor experience."¹⁰ He set out his

Major General
Philip Schuyler



ideas in detail in a message to Continental Congress President, John Jay. But does this letter provide grounds for saying that the author was antislavery (as John Miller, for example, concludes)?¹¹

Hamilton urged his compatriots to trust in common sense in the matter of the blacks' abilities, proceeding from considerations of what was best, because he wanted to make use of the opportunity to meet the Congress Army's acute manpower requirements. Hamilton's letter to Jay makes it possible to speak not so much of the author's humanism but rather of the pragmatism, bordering on cynicism, of this 24-year-old man. This is how he saw the advantages of using blacks as soldiers: "I have not the least doubt, that the negroes will make very excellent soldiers, with proper management, and I will venture to pronounce, that they cannot be put in better hands... It is a maxim with some great military judges, that with sensible officers soldiers can hardly be too stupid... I mention this, because I frequently hear it objected to the scheme of embodying negroes that they are too stupid to make soldiers. This is so far from appearing to me a valid objection that I think their want of cultivation (for their natural faculties

are probably as good as ours) joined to that habit of subordination which they acquire from a life of servitude, will make them sooner become soldiers, than our White inhabitants. Let officers be men of sense and sentiment, and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines perhaps the better."¹²

Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton gave a lot of thought to the small and major problems of the revolution. The organization of government, inflation and taxation policy are more prevalent in his papers during his army service than are purely military questions. Hamilton took a political approach when analyzing the successes and setbacks of the Continental Army. Unlike most officers, he attributed them not to the wisdom or otherwise of the command but rather sought to bring out the dependence of army affairs on the general domestic situation and the policies of the countries involved. In responding to the principal question—how to defeat Britain?—Hamilton was the last to take a narrow approach or to glorify the role of the armed forces. Finances, the state of industry and trade, the states' political unity, wisdom of statesmen and diplomatic successes—those were the factors which he felt determined victory or defeat on the battlefields. Hamilton feared the spontaneous operation of these factors. From the start of the revolution he believed that they should be subordinated to a single regulatory and directing will in the form of central government. Effective organization of government in the country in the interests of the bourgeois class became Hamilton's overriding concern.

The anti-British camp was divided in two on the question of the organization of government: proponents of the rights of states and supporters of strong central power.

On the eve of the revolution most patriots saw the mother country as the sole concrete form of centralized government. It was therefore not surprising that for a long time they regarded central political power as the main source of despotism and declared that a paramount objective of the American Revolution was

to eradicate it. Another reason for the colonists' negative attitude to centralization of political power in North America was the extremely undeveloped, embryonic national awareness. Americans considered themselves to be first and foremost citizens of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania or Virginia and only secondarily Americans. Patrick Henry's famous statement, "I am not a Virginian, I am an American," which some historians cite as proof of the formation of Americans' national awareness, had quite the opposite meaning in the context of the patriots' debate. Henry was using that statement to champion proportional rather than equal representation of the states in the Continental Congress since that would give Virginia, the most populous state, political dominance. The famous Virginian was a resolute opponent of strong central government and headed the Anti-federalists after the revolution.

Identifying as they did any form of central government with despotism, many Americans agreed to invest the Continental Congress, the first all-American body, with the minimal powers that they were prepared to delegate to the imperial authorities before the revolution.

In the prerevolutionary period it was an established opinion in the patriotic movement that the imperial authorities had the sole right to regulate the provinces' external trade. The movement leaders delegated all other prerogatives to each separate colonial assembly. On the eve and during the first stage of the revolution the patriots were against any scheme, whether coming from democrats or conservatives, giving central government greater powers than those of regulating trade.

In 1774 the First Continental Congress rejected a plan put forward by Joseph Galloway, leader of the moderate delegates, to set up a national council similar to the British House of Commons (Galloway's project was also bound to fail because it proposed that the council should be an adjunct of the British Parliament). A year later the Second Continental Congress turned down draft Articles of Confedera-

tion by Galloway's antagonist, Benjamin Franklin, who proposed a National Congress elected, like Galloway's council, on the basis of proportional representation and invested with very wide powers. The latter were to include regulation of the money circulation and trade of all the colonies, the creation of new colonies, Indian affairs, treaties with foreign powers and general direction of the Confederation's armed forces. The principal difference between his draft and the Articles of Confederation approved by 13 states in 1781 was that Franklin wanted a separate executive government body set up by a General Congress and responsible for the enforcement of legislation. (By the yardsticks of the time, the term of office of executive council members was also quite long—3 years.)

On July 12, 1776 the Continental Congress formed a committee headed by John Dickinson to draft the Articles of Confederation. Dickinson's draft was unsatisfactory to the Congress in the main thing—distribution of prerogatives and duties between the central government and the states. Dickinson gave each state the right to regulate and manage internal affairs in all instances not contrary to the Articles of Confederation, while Continental Congress powers were given broad and vague treatment, with Congress actually being definitely deprived of only one right—taxation. As to all the other prerogatives of state power, Dickinson's diffuse formulations left open the possibility of investing them in a central government. Broad interpretation of central government powers was also made possible by the circumstance that, unlike the rights of Congress, the states' prerogatives were accompanied by all kinds of qualifications; for example, their sole supreme right to set import duties could only be exercised if those duties did not contradict the central government's trade treaties.¹³

Dickinson's draft not only gave central government broad and indefinite powers but also envisaged setting up an executive body within it. Having disagreed with this measure when discussing Franklin's project, Continental Congress members also rejected

it when discussing the version by Dickinson, a moderate patriot. The draft Articles of Confederation approved by the Continental Congress on November 15, 1777 and referred to the states for ratification differed substantially on principal points from the proposals of both Franklin and Dickinson.

The draft proclaimed that the North American states were entering into "a firm league of friendship," and the most important article (the second) declared that each state retained its sovereignty, freedom and independence in exercising the rights not expressly delegated to the United States assembled in Congress. Since the draft did not mention the supremacy of the confederation, the states were to act as separate independent states. Although the powers of Congress seemed very impressive—it was vested with the exclusive right to decide questions of war and peace, appoint and recall ambassadors, enter into international agreements and alliances, determine the value of monies and their quantity in circulation, and some others—they were precisely defined, listed and regimented. All Congress rights, including its exclusive rights, had concomitant qualifications stressing states' sovereignty. Thus, Congress required the agreement of at least 9 states in order to exercise its exclusive rights.

There were very important rights which Congress was not given and without which it could never be an effective body. It did not have the right to set and collect either domestic or external (import duties) taxes. It also did not have the right to regulate inter-state trade, a situation which led to innumerable economic wars between the states. Congress was given the right to arbitrate all disputes between states but it did not have the means to enforce respect for its decisions. In every instance it had to rely on the goodwill of sovereign states.

Outwardly the Articles of Confederation accorded with democratic principles: they proclaimed the creation of a unicameral Continental Congress and weakened executive power to a maximum. This provided important grounds for the widely-held view

in American historiography (a view formulated by Merrill Jensen) that the adoption of the Articles of Confederation signified the triumph of the democratic wing of the revolution and defeat of the moderate Founding Fathers. This view is not persuasive. The democrats never had any substantial influence at all in the Continental Congress, which elaborated the Articles of Confederation, a document which appeared primarily as a result of the sharp disagreements between states and their unwillingness to forego their economic and political interests for the sake of national unity. After the adoption of the Articles, the states became like independent principalities and their nominal suzerain, the Continental Congress, rapidly lost the authority which it had had in the first year of the war. At times it seemed that the governments of the states had completely forgotten about its existence. At one of its sessions, delegations turned up from only 3 states, and in 1784, Congress was barely able to scrape together a quorum to ratify the treaty with Britain.

Hamilton was one of the few persons strongly to oppose the Articles of Confederation as soon as they had been drafted. His letters, articles and pamphlets criticizing the Articles painted a dismal picture of chaos inside the country and lack of success at talks abroad. The point of the gloomy prophecy and constant allusions to the tragic fate of the ancient Greek republics, who perished because they could not unite under a common power, was fully to disarm the proponents of states' sovereignty.

Hamilton was able to influence people's minds and feelings. His descriptions of the disastrous results of political decentralization were perturbing. He showed how rejection of monopoly in the issue of bank notes and the granting to states of the right freely to issue them had led to runaway inflation. The state governments started to print bank notes without considering the need to have gold and silver to back them. Money became a fiction and was no longer accepted as payment anywhere. Based on his own daily observations, Hamilton showed that the main-

tenance of armed forces by states had resulted in their militia ignoring the will of the Continental Congress. Soldiers often refused to fight beyond their own states.

Especially intolerable, Hamilton stated, was denial of the right of taxation to the Continental Congress. It could only solicit from state governments the funds necessary to cover its expenses. As a government without a purse, the Continental Congress was unable to pay army salaries. Foreign states refused to grant loans to such a government for there was no hope of getting their investment back, much less with a profit. In general, Hamilton concluded pessimistically, many people abroad and inside the country as well did not take Congress seriously, seeing the central body as a temporary phenomenon. It was not suitable for either peace or war, Hamilton felt.

Despite his gloomy assessment of the situation in America at the turn of the 1780s, Hamilton never believed that the young republic's hardships were insurmountable. He persistently pointed to ways out of the situation. During the drawn-out process of states' approving the Articles of Confederation, when this absurd and imprudent (in his view) document had not yet been put in force, he demanded that Congress consider itself the supreme authority in the country. In letters to Congress members Hamilton urged them to act as decisively as had the Congress of 1775-1776, which had dared to create an army and proclaim independence though not having the constitutional prerogatives. Such calls were at that time appropriate from a revolutionary standpoint.

Hamilton was put beside himself by the weak will and lack of initiative of the Continental Congress, which was being further and further removed from leadership of the country following the 1777 drafting of the Articles of Confederation. He tried to discover the reasons for the passivity of the central body, one of which he felt was the unification of legislative and executive power in Congress, which led to col-

lective irresponsibility in the implementation of decisions. He persistently demanded that Congress form an independent executive power modeled on the British cabinet of ministers. And in his opinion at least three departments—of war, finance and foreign affairs—had to be set up immediately. Yet another reason for Congress passivity was the preponderance of untalented deputies in it. He felt that the withdrawal of brilliant leaders of 1776 from that body was inevitable. The levers of government were being increasingly transferred to the states, and the political minds and talents were being drawn like a magnet toward power and to those places where they could show their worth. They were easily leaving Congress and rushing back to the states in search of real politics. Hamilton dreamed of a different Congress headed by strong people.

He was bitterly disappointed by the March 1781 ratification of the Articles of Confederation. And the delight of their proponents had not yet died down when Hamilton began to agitate for an early revision. He was one of the first political leaders to call for convocation of an extraordinary convention for that purpose.

Defense of the interests of the propertied now and then showed through the concern of Washington's aide-de-camp over the economic, military and international position of the American Republic. When Hamilton criticized the chaos in the financial system he was especially anxious about the creditors and usurers, who had to accept extremely devalued bank notes from their debtors. During the war years he began to show that only the financial, commercial and manufacturing bourgeoisie could be a firm support for the federal government. Hamilton felt that in order to ally with them Congress should establish a monopoly on the issue of bank notes and maintain a steady exchange rate. A national bank should cement the union between the government and the propertied. Hamilton began to press for a national bank from the late 70s. Such a bank, he felt, should be set up by the government using funds of the coun-



Gouverneur Morris

try's moneybags. Both would gain from the bank's activity: for the former it would be a source of subsidy, while it would provide the latter with high dividends (Nathan Schachner calculated that a national bank would bring depositors 1000 percent profits).

In general Hamilton was demanding that the government should take charge of the development of industry and trade. When he began to speak on economic matters, Britain was advocating the principles of free trade and full freedom of competition. They were classically expressed in 1776 in Adam Smith's work *Wealth of Nations*. But it was precisely these principles which Hamilton rejected, regarding Colbert, a minister of Louis XIV, and not Adam Smith, as the real economic genius. Hamilton believed it was the best economic policy to have the government take charge of the development of industry and trade, and proposed that the American government should follow the principles of economic policy of absolutist regimes.

In assessing Hamilton's economic principles it should be borne in mind that he was concerned about the needs of the feeble US industry and trade. While

Robert Morris



British capital, the strongest in the world, sought full freedom of action and the abolition of protectionist tariffs, its American counterpart needed protection and defense against foreign competition. Hamilton had guessed the needs of local capitalism.

At the turn of the 80s Hamilton could compete with the country's best-known political leaders in knowledge and understanding of the USA's domestic and international problems. He became increasingly burdened by the post of chief of Washington's office, a post which had enabled him to acquire all this knowledge, make contact and strengthen his relations with eminent financiers and leaders of the Continental Congress and local legislatures. Hamilton no longer had any doubt that political activity was his calling (and this was true). His fortunate marriage and access to the country's aristocratic circles heightened his ambitions. Influential friends paved the way for him to high political posts.

In 1779 the Continental Congress established the post of Superintendent of Finance (actually Secretary of the Treasury) and Congressmen James Duane and General Sullivan immediately began to recommend Hamilton for the post. On January 29, 1780

Washington received a letter asking him to comment on Hamilton's possible appointment as director of Congress fiscal policy. The Commander in Chief replied that rarely did he meet people with knowledge as vast as Hamilton's. But Washington's benevolence did not help Hamilton to get the post this time, the vacancy being filled by the country's financial prince—Robert Morris. The setback fired rather than decreased the lieutenant-colonel's ambitions. Excessive ambitiousness on the part of Hamilton was apparently a cause of the more frequent quarrels between himself and Washington.

Relations between Washington and his aide-de-camp worsened in 1780 following an episode connected with the treachery of Benedict Arnold, commandant of the key American fort of West Point. Hamilton was in West Point the day before the treachery was discovered, and Washington was expected to arrive the next day. By coincidence, the evening when Hamilton was pleasantly whiling away the time with the fort commandant and his beauty of a wife, the American sentry captured Arnold's scout—the British Major John André, who was hurrying from the West Point commandant to his accomplices in New York with a plan for surrendering the fort. The scout was brought to the fort just as the Commander in Chief was arriving. By the time Arnold was missed, he had already fled to the British. André was the only conspirator whom the Americans were able to punish, and Washington ordered that the officer should be strung up like an ordinary spy. Hamilton objected and proposed that André should instead be shot. The Commander in Chief convulsed at the aide-de-camp's request and relations between them became frankly strained from then on.

The break between Washington and Hamilton came on February 16, 1780. Hamilton was leaving the headquarters on business when he met the Commander in Chief, who asked him to come to see him. Hamilton promised to do so in a minute. Passing his errand over to another officer, he hurried to the general but was stopped on the way by his friend Marquis de

Lafayette. The two friends fell into conversation and when Hamilton reached the Commander in Chief he said angrily that Hamilton had kept him waiting 10 minutes, which meant that he had been disrespectful. The aide-de-camp flew into a rage and said that he was prepared to part with Washington. After a pause, the general coldly agreed.

Hamilton stayed in the army until November 1781. Following the break with Washington he was made commander of a battalion, but there was no time to prove himself in battle. The victory of the joint American and French forces near Yorktown in October 1781 ended military operations and this ambitious young man no longer had anything to do in the army. In the fall of 1781 he retired.

Saying goodbye to his army friends, Hamilton left for his father-in-law's villa in Albany. After giving it some thought, he decided on a career in law, a profession which had long been held in high regard in North America. It also had other advantages: a large income if he was successful, and contacts with influential businessmen and politicians. Furthermore, political leaders most often came from among lawyers.

Hamilton succeeded in many things without difficulty, and law was no exception. In July 1782 he amazed members of the New York state Supreme Court with his legal knowledge and was given permission to conduct a law practice. He could now open his own legal office. But at that moment the Superintendent of Finance of the Continental Congress Robert Morris offered Hamilton the post of federal tax collector in his state, and Hamilton, seeing an opportunity for direct contact with Congress members, accepted. It was a wrong decision.

In accepting Morris's offer, Hamilton let himself in for endless squabbles with the state legislature. State legislatures—and the New York one was no exception—had a very definite and simple understanding of their financial obligations before the central authority: skillfully avoid paying federal taxes. The difficulties facing Hamilton were made worse by the fact that George Clinton, a strong opponent

of greater central power, was entrenched as state governor. Hamilton quickly learned that it was sheer utopia to expect to obtain money from a legislature headed by such a governor.

His first step in his new post was to attempt to regulate and simplify tax collection for the Continental Congress in New York, to which end he suggested to the New York legislators that they transfer the import duties collected in the state to the federal treasury. The legislature dismissed this proposal for import duties were the local treasury's only reliable source of revenue and collecting them was much easier than squeezing dollars from sullen farmers. The resourceful federal tax collector was told: let other states carry out that reform first. This answer removed all hope of collecting funds for the Continental Congress in New York. The post of federal tax collector had to be resigned without delay.

As soon as Hamilton was appointed tax collector, General Philip Schuyler, then speaker of the Senate in the New York legislature, apparently realized that his son-in-law would only ruin his career in that post. And while Hamilton engaged in rhetoric with the local congress, he was preparing another place for him. It was decided to promote Hamilton to the Continental Congress. The New York legislature had no objection, and from the end of July 1782 Schuyler's son-in-law became a deputy from the state of New York in the central body. The Continental Congress was facing mounting problems. Britain had been defeated and it was just a matter of securing the most advantageous peace terms at the negotiations in Versailles. But the contradictions inside the country were deepening. Unrest had started among the soldier rank-and-file, and local radicals in the states were planning to deal with the former Loyalists. All these social conflicts could end in internal cataclysms and the Philadelphia Congress had to tackle them urgently.

Veterans and Loyalists

When Hamilton was elected deputy to the Continental Congress his federalist program had already taken final form. He himself had no doubt that he knew the solutions to all America's problems. But the events of 1783 forced him to make substantial additions to his doctrine. That year marked a distinctive stage in the formation of the young American Republic. The War of Independence, when all efforts were concentrated on fighting Britain, was behind, and ahead lay sharp class battles inside the country in which the masses were now fighting against the debt bondage, restrictions of their political rights, and against the land speculators and latifundists. The lower classes wanted to continue the revolution even after the victory over Britain, but events took a new turn.

The first disturbances began in the army. Veterans who had only just forced Britain to surrender found that they had obtained nothing from victory except worthless certificates. (During the war the Continental Congress had paid them certificates, promising to exchange them for money immediately after the war, but the Congress treasury remained empty after victory.) Agitators in the army showed how unjust it was that veterans who had shed their blood should return home with nothing while the moneybags who had greeted them with patriotic cries had greatly increased their fortunes without losing a lock of hair. Army men were resolved to champion their interests even by force of arms.

Hamilton caught the new impulse of the revolution very early and it alarmed him. From early in 1783 he told a too cheerful Continental Congress that he knew the army spirit well and that it had been secretly agreed among the soldiers not to disarm until their demands were satisfied. In a letter dated February 13, 1783 to Washington, who held nothing against his former aide, Hamilton tried to persuade him to use his authority among the soldiers to take the leadership of the army into his hands. The next

day he wrote an anxious letter to the New York governor George Clinton expressing apprehension that the end of the war could become a prelude for civil commotions.¹⁴

At the beginning of June 1783, Congress in Philadelphia ordered that the army be disbanded without meeting its demands. And on June 15, 300 soldiers of the Continental Army quartered in Pennsylvania took aim at the Congress building and gave a 20-minute ultimatum for the payment of several months' salaries. As soon as the ultimatum was made known, all the Congress deputies left the building through a back door. Assembled elsewhere, they set up a three-man commission to settle the conflict. As a member of it, Hamilton was able to prove his worth. While other commission members thought of holding talks with the soldiers, the ex-lieutenant-colonel resolutely demanded that they be forcibly dispersed, to which end he proposed that the government of the state of Pennsylvania be approached for assistance. Hamilton personally took part in the talks with John Dickinson, president of the Executive Council of the state, and the state legislature.

The Pennsylvania government advised Congress to mend relations with the soldiers through talks. In order to uphold the honor of the country's central body, the Continental Congress resorted to a means which had often proved a salvation from British onslaughts during the war—it fled to another town (Princeton, New Jersey).

Hamilton was infuriated both by the soldiers' actions and by the behavior of members of the Pennsylvanian government, drawing from these events fresh arguments for his Federalist doctrine. In Congress's July 1783 Princeton draft resolutions Hamilton pointed out for the first time that the 1781 American Constitution made no proper provision for "interior or exterior defence."¹⁵ From then on protection of the social order from democratic movements invariably figured in Hamilton's Federalist agitation.

Following the 1783 Philadelphia events Hamilton also deemed it his duty to have a talk with Dickinson,

head of Pennsylvania's executive. This representative of the local establishment and property owner with aristocratic manners could hardly be suspected of democratic leanings. He had become widely known in the colonies in 1768 as the author of *The Letters of a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, but it was another circumstance which caused his name to go down in history. Opposed to North America's breakaway from Britain, in 1776 Dickinson was the only member of the Continental Congress to vote against the Declaration of Independence. His stance on social questions was a very moderate one. And in June 1783 his reason for refusing to send the state militia to the aid of the federal government was not sympathy for the rebelling soldiers but rather his ardent defense of the rights of states. Hamilton wanted to make Dickinson understand that his stubborn adherence to the rights of states was inimical to his own social and political principles.

Hamilton's letter to Dickinson is of interest in many respects. It made apparent for the first time his departure from a number of important ideological postulates which he had set out in his pamphlets of 1774 and 1775. Criticizing the British Parliament's despotic rule on the eve of the War of Independence, Hamilton spoke of the rights of the individual as the supreme value for the society. In his letter to Dickinson he stated that in democratic societies like the USA there was constant danger that public authority would not be sufficiently respected by individuals and that in such societies, therefore, "the rights of government are as essential to be defended as the rights of the individual,"¹⁶ thus shifting the emphasis in his register of social values.

Hamilton's demands that the army action in Pennsylvania should be suppressed were clearly at odds with the people's right to revolt proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence. He used verbal sophistry to downplay this discrepancy. The right to revolt, he wrote to Dickinson, applies only to the nation as a whole, while any action by a part of the nation distorts this right and constitutes an illegal

riot.¹⁷ By formulating the people's right to rebellion in this way, Hamilton invented a theoretical loophole for the bourgeois-planter authority which could be used to justify the suppression of any mass action. Indeed, however widespread an action, one could always prove that it still did not involve the nation as a whole.

Throughout his term in the Continental Congress Hamilton persistently urged it to consider calling an extraordinary convention to review the Articles of Confederation, but Congress remained deaf to his requests. The New York deputy could now see for himself that Congress was incapable of initiating important undertakings for it feared to contradict the will of the state governments.

The term of office of the Congress convened in 1782 expired in summer 1783. Hamilton was to face new social turmoil in New York, where the local radicals had firm positions in the legislature and were planning a series of measures against the resident Loyalists who had cooperated with the British during the War of Independence. The Loyalists were almost exclusively well-to-do, and it was they whom the indigent patriots were aiming thoroughly to shake.

As soon as the last British soldiers left New York in December 1783 the local patriots demanded that the Loyalists should have their property confiscated and be denied political rights or even expelled from the state. The anti-Loyalist campaign reached a peak in the state during the local legislature elections in winter 1783-1784. The radicals were led by the Whig Society.

Hamilton instantly guessed the new objectives of the patriotic movement. The patriotic campaign, he wrote to his ex-guardian, Robert Livingston, had aims "of the levelling kind," and the end result might be "the confusion of all property and principle" if those in the legislature remain in power.¹⁸

With the intensifying social motives in the mass movement following the war, Hamilton took a new approach to dividing his compatriots into friend and foe. Class instinct told him, this heir to Schuyler's

riches, a director of a New York bank, that the allies of the patriotic property-owners during the War of Independence had now turned into their enemies, while the former sworn enemies of his circle of patriots—the Loyalists—were becoming allies. They were being brought together by concern for the interests of property and order, and a desire to keep power in the hands of their class. As soon as he arrived in New York and opened a law office on the now famous Wall Street, Hamilton opened its doors to the harassed Loyalists.

Hamilton liked to begin defense of the conservatives with reference to the peace treaty with Britain, which not only outlawed further persecution of the Loyalists but also called for restoration of the rights of property and citizenship to all Americans deprived of them during the war (unless they had fought with arms against the US army). Then Hamilton would accuse the New York legislature of violating the principles of democracy. The state legislatures, he held, had deprived the Loyalists of the rights to property without trial or investigation. Hamilton's ill-boding prophecy was that the New York legislature would soon abolish juries, deprive all dissenters of suffrage, usurp all power in the state and grow into an oligarchy.

A comparison of Hamilton's attitude to two opposite groups of American society, the soldier masses in Pennsylvania in 1783 and the property-owning Loyalists in New York in 1784-1785, leaves no doubt about his chosen class position: he defended the propertied. And judging by his rapid rise, the powers that be liked the ideas and actions of the lawyer-banker.

Popular unrest swept across more and more states after 1783. The most serious case was the farmer uprising led by war veteran Daniel Shays in Massachusetts in late 1786. Hamilton did not rack his brains to find the cause of the uprising; for him it was clear as day: "If Shays had not been a *desperate debtor*, it is much to be doubted whether Massachusetts would have been plunged into a civil

war."¹⁹ Hamilton saw signs of new Shayeses in every corner of the country, and the experience of the government of Massachusetts, which had barely been able to deal with the farmer uprising with its own forces, inclined him even more toward strong federal government. The people, he repeated over and over, must be subdued.

By 1787 the Articles of Confederation had become a clear anachronism in the eyes of the propertied of America, who were trying to do away with them. To that end 55 delegates from various states, Hamilton one of the most impatient among them, rushed to Philadelphia in May 1787.

The Constitutional Convention begun on May 25, 1787 was the culminating point in the formation of the United States. Its participants, who drafted the US Constitution now in force, are the ones known above all as the Founding Fathers of the nation. All this did not by any means reflect the will of the states, whose legislatures instructed their delegates to the forum merely to elaborate some additions to the Articles of Confederation. But already on May 29 the delegation of the largest state, Virginia, submitted a draft federal constitution to the convention.

Read by Edmund Randolph, the Virginian draft gave central government the absolute power which the British Parliament had claimed in North America before the War of Independence. At that time the patriots had identified such prerogatives of central power with despotism, but now the convention delegates were singing psalms to them. When Randolph read the last point of the draft, which said that the federal legislative assembly was entrusted with the right to annul all laws passed locally if, in the opinion of central power, they contradicted the US Constitution, an ironic question was asked: was he not going to do away with the state governments as well?

The small states in particular objected to the Virginia plan, for it envisaged the creation of a bicameral legislature with proportional representation of the states in both houses. The small states saw in this a

clear infringement of their interests and opposed the Virginia draft with their own. On their behalf the New Jersey delegation demanded adherence to the scheme of representation laid down in the Articles of Confederation, i.e. a unicameral legislative power in which each state would have one vote.

Hamilton addressed the Constitutional Convention for the first time on June 4, 1787, speaking in favor of the chief executive having the right to an absolute veto with respect to legislative assembly decisions. His speech was met with a hail of criticism from George Mason of Virginia and Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania.

On June 18, 1787 Hamilton again took the floor in the morning, making a 5-hour speech in which he outlined all his views on the American constitution. The New York delegate understood that the convention was deciding the fate of the nation for many years and perhaps decades to come.

He began by saying that the drawn out argument over representation of various states in the federal government was an insubstantial one. Hamilton attacked the small state delegations from New Jersey and Connecticut, which had proposed perpetuating the unicameral system of federal legislative power with equal rights for the representatives of each state. He cited the experience of the Continental Congress and showed that such representation was a congress of envoys of states hostile to each other who had only territorial claims on their minds. They had been unable to create a strong army or a fleet worthy of a great nation, had not been able to make proper provision for either external or internal security, and had proved incapable of righting the chaos in the economy and finances or of protecting trade, industry and the banks. The 11 years of an independent USA had shown that the interests of the nation had been entrusted to incompetent hands.

Hamilton suggested establishing a bicameral US legislative assembly. He was utterly opposed to equal representation of states, even in the upper house. Here was a staunch proponent of a unitary govern-

ment system, while other deputies ventured only to compromise between state and national representation in the supreme governing body.

Hamilton unexpectedly declared that the best political form of state known to the world was the British one, i.e. a constitutional monarchy. And he began to list its "merits." True, in a show of political sobriety, Hamilton then said that the British form of rule could not be established in the US in its pure form and that only some of its principles could be adopted. Nevertheless his enthusiastic panegyrics with respect to the British political system left his audience in no doubt that Hamilton was a monarchist.

Hamilton never spoke in favor of monarchy either before or after June 18, 1787. In 1792 when, as Secretary of the Treasury, he was accused of monarchist beliefs, he indignantly stated that such accusations were nothing but insinuations on the part of Jefferson and his entourage. He vehemently denied that he had ever been in sympathy with the British constitution and described as a fool anyone who seriously believed it was possible to establish monarchist rule in the USA.

Certainly, Hamilton did not favor the kind of monarchy that was the classic government and legal form in European feudal societies but he was attracted to the very principle of investing one individual with executive power since he believed that that would best meet the interests of the bourgeoisie given the sharp social cataclysms of the postrevolutionary period and the process of the USA's formation as an independent nation.

During the War of Independence Hamilton sought to prove in his federalist propaganda that a strong central power was in the interests of the country as a whole. It was at the Constitutional Convention that he first divided Americans into a minority and a majority and first openly proclaimed that the government should be created and led by the minority and serve its interests. Hamilton deceived neither himself nor his audience regarding the tendencies of US so-

Governor
George Clinton



cial development. He said that the differences between the minority and the majority were going to intensify as industry and trade in the country progressed.²⁰ He therefore submitted to the delegates a draft US constitution in which the interests of the minority would be shielded by a Chinese wall from encroachments by the majority.

Hamilton's draft would give the top American officials, senators and the President, their post for life (he dropped the idea of a monarchy for the USA as soon as it became clear that it was unpopular among most convention members). Senatorships would be elected by two-stage polling, and the President by even three-stage voting. The right to run in Senate elections would be given to those who had inherited real estate and had had no debts during the 14 years prior to the elections. Presidential candidates would come from among those owners of real estate who could prove their family rights to it over three generations or those who had a fortune of at least one thousand Spanish gold dollars. Like a monarch, the President would have absolute executive power and the right to an absolute veto of Congress deci-

sions, and would appoint the members of the Supreme Court.

Hamilton's draft was an extreme expression of tendencies and intentions characteristic of Constitutional Convention deputies. The convention eventually discarded his scheme for a unitary oligarchic system headed by President and senators elected for life in favor of a federal presidential republic of property-owners in which a President would be elected every four years, Senators every six years, and members of the House of Representatives every two years.

The draft constitution removed the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation with which Hamilton had been displeased. It also contained many of his ideas. Hamilton spoke in favor of it as soon as the draft was finalized and immediately began to lobby delegates to sign it. Not everyone did so. Only one name, that of Hamilton himself, appeared in the place allotted for signatures of New York representatives. Two delegates from the state, Robert Yates and John Lansing, had long left the convention and were preparing the New York legislature for a resolute battle against the Federal Constitution. Nor were opponents of the draft constitution in other states dozing. The delegates who signed the draft on September 17, 1787 still had a fight ahead of them at the state ratification conventions.

New York governor Clinton was in no hurry to convene a ratification convention for he wanted to prolong the existence of the Articles of Confederation and at the same time to prepare his supporters as well as possible to do battle with the Federalists. Clinton felt it was very important to get public opinion against the Constitutional Convention decisions and he therefore began regularly to place "Cato's Letters" in a local newspaper. But hardly had the first letter appeared than another hero of old—Caesar—was resurrected in the local press and sought to sway readers to completely different points of view. Caesar's armor robed none other than Hamilton.

Hamilton spent only part of his time arguing with Clinton. He was dreaming of greater things: providing philosophical substantiation of the Constitution. Never satisfied with just a little, he wanted to formulate a "symbol of faith" for the nation, for which he needed popular coauthors, or at least their names, because he did not place much hope in his own authority among Americans. A triumvirate was quickly formed—Hamilton, John Jay, his long-time friend of similar opinions and former president of the Continental Congress, and James Madison, the future fourth President of the USA.

The triumvirate's first article, entitled "The Federalist," appeared on October 27, 1787, a little over a month after the Constitutional Convention, and the last—on May 28, 1788. A total of 85 such articles were published. Jay's contribution was minimal—5 articles of not very great significance (Nos 2-5 and 64), while Hamilton wrote the lion's share.

Hamilton's efforts were appreciated and rewarded by the powerful of this world: in August 1788 George Washington, the country's first presidential candidate, wrote to *The Federalist* author commenting enthusiastically on his ideas. Washington clearly exaggerated the importance of Hamilton's work in the history of human thought. The articles of Hamilton and his coauthors were merely the most complete and systematic presentation of the ideology of the bourgeois-planter bloc, whose power was finally fully established by the Federal Constitution.

The first 30 issues of *The Federalist* criticized the disastrous political, economic and social effects of states' sovereignty. Hamilton believed that disunity among the states was the source of the two principal political problems. The first was inter-state rivalry. The causes of conflict were many and varied: trade and industrial competition, the scramble for the unsettled lands in the West, and a desire for political hegemony. Hamilton showed that, far from increasing their might, as some claimed, competition between the states was weakening them. For those whom lack of political vision prevented from seeing this,

Hamilton cited examples from the experience of state unions from the distant and not so distant past.

The conflicts between hostile social groupings in each state were given as another ineradicable cause of problems. Hamilton ridiculed the democrats' view that the very nature of a republic like the North American states excluded the possibility of sharp social clashes.

Rebellions, wrote Hamilton, were not only inevitable in North America but, as the Shays Rebellion showed, could be a real threat to its political system. And what would happen, he went on, if Shayses were found in New York and Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and other states? The local authorities were not capable of dealing with such actions and a weak central government could not help them, in fact it would not have the right to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Hamilton thus led his readers to the conclusion that stable social order in the country was impossible unless states renounced their major sovereign rights and gave the central government a powerful coercive apparatus and the authority to carry out police functions.

Hardly had the last issue of *The Federalist* appeared than Hamilton began lavishing praises on the new Constitution at the New York ratification convention, where debate lasted for more than a month—from June 17 to July 26, 1788. The Federalists' joy knew no bounds when Hamilton's team finally succeeded in breaking the resistance of the Clinton faction and getting the Constitution ratified. The New York carpenters (many Federalists among them) right away knocked together a 32-gun frigate which they named *Alexander Hamilton*, while the shipyard owners, not to be outdone, built their own ship in honor of the Federalist leader. Their ship was christened *New Constitution* to distinguish it from the carpenters' frigate. But its bow, like that of the frigate, was decorated with a wooden sculpture of Hamilton. In his left hand were the discredited Articles of Confederation, and in his right—the new Constitu-

tion. The brow of the wooden Federalist was dressed in a wreath of laurels. The canonization of Hamilton had begun. And just at the right time, in the view of the well-wishers of this Federalist, who turned 33 that year.

Secretary of the Treasury Who Wanted to Be Premier

The Federal Constitution took effect in summer 1788. In early 1789, almost 12 years after the American Republic came into being, the country's first chief executive was elected: George Washington became President. Later the three Departments—of State, the Treasury, and War, which Hamilton had advocated back in the late 1770s, were formed. Thus was the foundation of the cabinet system laid. But it was a much more complicated matter to define the basis of the domestic and foreign policy of the new government.

To judge by the constitutional principle of executive power, the basis of American policies was to be determined above all by the President. But Washington, as became clear, did not particularly want that role. However, Alexander Hamilton, the first US Secretary of the Treasury, was dreaming of that role. The President had no objection, but Hamilton's aspiration for power encountered the serious resistance of Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson.

Hamilton assumed the post with a ready stock of ideas which he had offered the American public in the course of the preceding 10 years. It was now time to make these ideas the economic program of the federal government, and that was in fact done in less than two years in several reports to Congress: On Public Credit (January 14, 1790), On the Bank of the United States (December 13, 1790), On the Mint (January 28, 1791), and On Manufactures (December 5, 1791).

Hamilton's economic program aimed to strengthen the unity between the government and the bourgeois circles, to give the government a regulating role in the



Secretary of the Treasury. A portrait by John Trumbull, 1792

development of the national economy as a whole, and to enable it to stimulate finances, trade and industry so as to ensure their advanced growth by comparison with agriculture.

In the Report on Public Credit Hamilton supplied economic grounds for a union between the government and the big capitalists. A principal requirement of the nation, he said, is credit, but in order to obtain it, it must learn to pay its debts punctually. For a start, Hamilton said point-blank, it is necessary to liquidate at nominal value all the external and internal debts of Congress and the states. Many delegates shuddered at these words for the national debt stood at \$80 million. The democrats saw in the Secretary's proposal the ploys of a capitalist devil: the lion's share of the internal debt was made up of soldier certificates which had moved from their original holders, who had lost faith in them, to the hands of the money bosses. Considering that the

speculators had bought up the certificates from the soldiers at 10-12 percent of their nominal value, it was easy to calculate that Hamilton's plan would bring them a 1000 percent profit. This was obvious cheating of the government and the taxpayers, and the democrats resolved to do battle with the Secretary of the Treasury.

Their counterproposal was very simple: pay off at the nominal exchange rate only the certificates in the hands of the original holders, while the others should be paid at actual value or cancelled altogether. Hamilton explained to his opponents that the objective was not to cancel the debt but to pay the money to people who would then gladly grant the government new credits. And those people were not the ex-soldiers but the speculators that had robbed them. The democrats eventually had to yield in the face of the onslaught by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Hamilton was able to find only two sources for paying off the creditors: import duties and excise on the production and sale of rum and whisky. The wealthy New England rum-makers were in no way affected by the excise enacted by Congress in 1791; they merely passed the burden onto the consumer by raising prices. But the small farmers of the West who distilled whisky and had only a limited market were deprived of a main source of income. Thomas Jefferson and his supporters saw Hamilton's tax policy, which in no way infringed on the interests of the financiers and traders, as a carefully calculated blow at their agrarian party.

Hamilton scored a real victory with the 1791 creation of the Bank of the United States. After a short debate on its constitutionality, Congress yielded to the Secretary of the Treasury on this issue as well. Based on an analysis of the experience of the Bank of England, Hamilton had persistently spoken of the advantages which this financial giant would bring to the USA. The national bank was to grant credit to federal and private interests and issue bank notes. It was assigned the wonder-working role of increasing the nation's capital and wealth. It would, Hamilton

declared, not only grant credit out of available funds but also issue bank notes not backed by precious metals thus creating artificial capital that would be a powerful additional leverage over industry and trade.²¹

During the war years Hamilton had been a strong opponent of unregulated issue of paper money by states and described it as a cause of the collapse of the economy. In the 90s his speeches carried the idea that not all inflation was alike, that it was an evil when it resulted from anarchy and lack of coordination between numerous banks but a boon when it proceeded under the strict control of a bank monopoly and was kept in proportion to bank assets and interest on credit, the latter being a return on real capital and an antidote to the inflation.

Hamilton, with his ideas of artificial inflation and the capital-creating role of credit, may rightly be considered a founder of the theory of banks as a means of creating new capital via credit operations.

The Bank of the United States was set up jointly by the federal government (with one-fifth of the shares) and large creditors, which was in keeping with Hamilton's desire to strengthen the bonds between the government and financiers. Many holders of bought-up soldier certificates became bank depositors, having exchanged their devalued certificates for shares guaranteeing them a sure annual income.

Hamilton persistently preached the idea of creating large manufactories in the country. He had weighty counterarguments for the critics, who said that large enterprises could not be developed because of the extreme shortage of labor and the absence of large fortunes. Manual labor, Hamilton pointed out, would give way to machines, and vigorous introduction of the new technical inventions at American manufactories would easily overcome the labor shortage. Furthermore, he continued, the US had not made use of the British experience of exploiting female and child labor. As to the lack of large individual fortunes, Hamilton explained that that problem would be easily resolved with the creation of

the national bank, which would subsidize any number of entrepreneurs with any sum.

The final part of Hamilton's economic program called for protection of the national industry. He submitted a broad series of measures to Congress: protective or even, if necessary, prohibitive import duties on the types of commodities produced locally; a ban on the export of raw materials and import incentives where they were in short supply; promotion of inventions and discoveries inside the country and introduction of other countries' technical achievements in the American industry; government-sponsored quality control of output; construction of new and improvement of old roads and canals, etc.

Hamilton demanded that the government should have a universal supervising authority in the US trade and industrial development, bringing in a series of broad measures to encourage national trade and manufacture. He advanced the concept of developing American trade and industry along the lines of active commerce, which, he explained, would mean intensive navigation, exports exceeding imports, a high development of manufactories and the fullest use of internal economic resources. Active commerce, he maintained, would secure for the USA an independent and then a leading economic position in the world. In that respect it differed from passive commerce, which would inevitably triumph in the USA if it continued to adhere to self-confined trade and which would result in the country's economic enslavement by foreign powers.

Yet Hamilton was not altogether opposed to economic liberalism; neither was he in favor of all regulation of industry and trade. For example, he strongly condemned price control and feudal-type economic regimentation, that is, on the whole all regulation which impeded private capitalist accumulation and economic growth. Hamilton accepted only the regulation that would provide for the fullest development of the national productive forces. In his scheme of things competition should remain the sole regulator of economic relations on the dome-

stic market. But at the same time the government was to protect national industry from external competition.

It needs to be noted that Hamilton's plan to encourage national industry, which included a series of protectionist measures, was primarily in the interests of large manufacturers, while the small and medium property-owners, including the owners of scattered manufactories, were denied government protection. This fact was skillfully employed by the Jefferson Republicans, who placed in their program a series of measures to defend the interests of artisans and small producers.

One's attention is also drawn to the fact that, as the latest research has shown, Hamilton's practical policy was primarily in the interests of financiers and merchants rather than the industrial bourgeoisie. In his view, the demands of the weaker and less important industrial bourgeoisie were not so urgent and should therefore be subordinated to the interests of the financial and commercial bourgeoisie for the time being.

Such was the extensive economic platform of the Secretary of the Treasury—the so-called Hamilton road of US development. He tried to show the proponents of US agrarian development that the growth of factories and towns would also favorably affect agriculture since one effect would be to increase demand for farm products. Congress heeded his arguments and quickly began to carry out his recommendations, starting with the simplest—higher import duties.

Hamilton's principal economic plans had become law by 1792. But his ambitious designs were still not satisfied. He dreamed of other ministerial posts. In 1794 he simultaneously occupied two government portfolios: Henry Knox, Secretary of War, resigned and Hamilton gladly took his place. In summer 1794, during his short period in that post, there was a farmer uprising in four Pennsylvania counties. Hamilton immediately described it as a Jacobin conspiracy to carry out a French-style coup and demanded

that the federal militia move into Pennsylvania.

Using his powers as War Secretary, Hamilton himself headed the action against the farmers. Arriving at the site he found to his great annoyance that there was no one to suppress: the farmers had decided not to tackle a 15,000-man army. Instead of bloody repression, there was only the arrest and questioning of a few dozen rebels. Hamilton took part in the questioning like an ordinary sheriff. This whole event was endlessly mocked and ridiculed in the Republican press, while Hamilton was forever compromised in democratic circles.

Hamilton's antidemocratic character was one of his most vulnerable spots in the eyes of Americans. While calling the idea of a monarchist party in the USA absurd, he advocated theories which were "less Republican" than those of Jefferson. Hamilton had no confidence in the Bill of Rights and strongly condemned the people's democratic initiatives.

As a member of the US government, Hamilton found he had a special interest in foreign policy. He resolutely opposed Secretary of State Jefferson's pro-French orientation, imposing an alliance with Britain by all means fair and foul.

As soon as he became Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton entered into very close contacts with British Major Beckwith, who fulfilled secret service missions for his country in the absence of British diplomatic representation in the USA. Beckwith was sent to the USA to put out feelers regarding the possibility of transporting British troops across United States territory to Louisiana, which London had long been contending for against Spain.

Hamilton welcomed Beckwith with open arms, hinting that for its service to Britain the USA would expect to receive part of Louisiana and the right of free access to the ocean via the Mississippi. But that was not all that he had in mind.

Beckwith was amazed by his meetings with Hamilton. He could not believe that he was speaking with a leading minister of a country which just seven years earlier had wrested peace from Britain. Britons

and Americans, Hamilton said, remained linked by blood. As a single people by origin and with a common language, religion, morals and culture, Hamilton reasoned, Britain and the USA should live in eternal peace and friendship and conclude an early trade treaty. Hamilton explained to Beckwith that two parties had taken shape in the USA: the pro-French party of Jeffersonians and the pro-British party of the Federalists. He advised the Englishman to have nothing to do with the US Secretary of State, a man, in his words, who was narrow-minded and, what is more, a fanatic Francophile. The Secretary of the Treasury thereby concentrated in his hands links with the leading West European power.

He gave quite a free interpretation of his talks with Beckwith to Washington and Jefferson. He kept silent regarding the negative aspects of Britain's attitude to the USA and spoke profusely about London's goodwill and its unity of interests with the American Republic.

American historian Julian P. Boyd, who brought to light all material on contacts between Hamilton and Beckwith, has published a book with the sensational title, *Number 7. Alexander Hamilton's Secret Attempts to Control American Foreign Policy* (1964). Boyd actually describes the first Secretary of the Treasury as a British agent, that is, he has tried to elevate to scientific truth the accusation laid against Hamilton in the 1790s by his political opponents.

Just how sound are Boyd's concept and the accusations by Hamilton's political opponents? In our view, they oversimplify and distort his motives. It would be, to say the least, naive and primitive to apply the yardstick of political agent of a foreign power to a political leader of Hamilton's stature. Yes, Beckwith did designate Hamilton as No. 7 in his reports to his government but that does not mean that he was agent No. 7. Beckwith made contact with many Federalists and kept dossiers on many US statesmen, and in reports to his superiors he designated them simply with ciphers: Secretary of War Knox—No. 4, Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton—No. 7, Supreme

Court Chief Justice Jay—No. 12, and so on. Furthermore, it would be a strained interpretation to claim that Beckwith used Hamilton for his purposes: with no less, and perhaps with more, grounds it could be proven that the latter wanted to make the Englishman instrumental in his socio-economic and political designs. One thing is clear: a very subtle diplomatic game existed between Hamilton and Beckwith; both players wanted a rapprochement between Britain and the USA but at the same time each of them sought to extract as much benefit as possible for his country.

This author is not trying to justify Hamilton's motives but rather to understand them. Like many of his objectives, Hamilton's foreign policy moves were pragmatic to the point of cynicism, but underlying them was always a profound analysis of the interests of the national commercial and financial bourgeoisie.

In an effort to be seen as a "party of peace" that used stabilization of relations with London merely as a means to achieve true national interests, the Federalists often publicly rebuffed accusations that they had pro-British sympathies. In a series of articles in the *Gazette of the United States*, Hamilton wrote that there were three parties in the country—a pro-French, a pro-British, and an American party. He sharply condemned both those who were pro-French and those who were pro-British, extolling the Federalists as representatives of the "truly American party" that had made an irrevocable choice in favor of US national interests. (Meanwhile, in confidential meetings with Beckwith Hamilton, as was noted earlier, recognized the existence of only two parties—the pro-French and the pro-British.) He also exposed the reason why the Federalists were hiding their sympathies—most of the nation supported development of relations with France.

Hamilton's sophisticated actions led to a temporary defeat of the Republican Party and Jefferson's resignation as Secretary of State. This was a triumph for Hamilton and cleared the way for a treaty with Britain. In 1794 it was signed by Jay in London. The treaty injured the national feeling of Americans, who



John Jay

had only just recently defeated Britain, and triggered mass protests in the country. Nevertheless ratification of the treaty by the US Congress in 1795 showed that the ruling circles had grasped Hamilton's logic.

However, by that time Hamilton's own strength had been sapped by the fierce struggle against opponents in which both sides used any and every available means.

In 1793 the Republicans dug up a scandal connected with Hamilton. In 1791, on a day when Elizabeth Hamilton was at her father's villa in Albany with the children, a Mrs. Mary Reynolds visited the Philadelphia home of the Secretary of the Treasury. Apparently displaying her abilities as an actress, she told Hamilton about how her husband had left her with no means of existence. An affair began between them following this encounter. One day Hamilton received a letter from James Reynolds saying that he was fully aware of the liaison and demanding money in exchange for silence. As to Mrs. Reynolds, she ceased to meet her lover from that day. Hamilton managed to pay off the blackmailing couple with a comfortable sum. But he was unable to conceal the scandal from his opponents.

Aaron Burr.
A portrait by John
Vanderlyn, 1802



In early 1795, fresh attacks in the Republican press forced Hamilton to resign. He intended to wait until the brouhaha around his name died down and then plunge once again into big politics. But circumstances did not favor his plans. In 1797 John Adams became the US President. This was the man who, as Vice-President under Washington had exerted no influence whatsoever on the cabinet while the Secretary of the Treasury had dictated his will there. Now Adams did not want the spiritual leader of his party within a mile of the cabinet doors. He flew into a rage and severely reprimanded members of his government when once he found out that Hamilton had been trying to influence them behind the scenes. Things were not going well for Hamilton even in his home state, where Republican leader Aaron Burr had erected insurmountable barriers on his road to power. By doing battle with Adams and Burr, Hamilton was sinking deeper and deeper into political intrigue.

Three sworn enemies of Hamilton's—John Adams,

Aaron Burr and Thomas Jefferson—ran for President in 1800. All the ex-Secretary's time was taken up with nurturing and carrying out plans for revenge. First he wrote a malicious pamphlet against Adams, accusing him of every mortal sin. Even Hamilton's close friends objected to the insinuations and persuaded him not to publish the pamphlet. However, a copy was already in the hands of Burr's agents, who immediately made it public. As a result Americans were able to see that, possessed by a thirst for revenge, Hamilton was prepared to split his own party at a time when the chances that their opponents would succeed were extremely great.

After that Hamilton focused all his energy on fighting against Burr. When the latter won the majority of the New York electoral college, Hamilton accused him of fraud and demanded that state governor Jay hold a fresh poll. Here he suddenly remembered "the people's right" to rebel against abuse of political power.²² Jay turned down Hamilton's demands. In the finale of the 1800 election race, two Republican candidates—Burr and Jefferson—polled absolutely equally in the electoral college, which meant that the US House of Representatives had the right to choose the President of the country. A majority of House members were Federalists who, their candidate having lost, now had to decide between two leaders of a hostile party. Hamilton, whose one great passion was to take vengeance on Burr, encouraged his people to vote for Jefferson, assuring them that the former Secretary of State was fairly pragmatic and, once President, would not be able to encroach on the foundations of the policy which the Federalists had followed in the 90s. The House of Representatives elected Thomas Jefferson President.

Hamilton's relations with the New York Republicans and their leader Burr worsened further, bringing real tragedy to the Hamilton family. The first victim was the elder son Philip. He visited a local theater with a friend on a November evening in 1802. A little tipsy, the young people talked scandal in a loud voice about the local Republican leader, George

Eaker sitting nearby. Eaker challenged both friends to a duel, and Philip was killed on November 23, 1802.

The same lot soon fell to Alexander Hamilton. On July 11, 1804 Burr, who felt Hamilton was to blame for all his misfortunes (the last being defeat in the 1802 New York governorship elections) met his enemy in a duel. Burr's first shot was fatal: Hamilton died the next day, July 12, 1804.

Hamilton lived for 49 years, 45 of them in the 18th and only 4 in the 19th century. But most historians are of the view that he belongs to the 19th, rather than the 18th century.

In Hamilton's time, when the USA and the entire world had only just embarked on a path of capitalist development, it was capitalism which was progressive. However, capitalist progress was contradictory by its very essence; its fruits were usurped by one class while the people's interests were infringed in every possible way. The character and morals of the leaders of the young bourgeois nations were often determined by these dominating factors of capitalist society. The political path of Alexander Hamilton, leader of the bourgeoisie and spokesman for the interests of young American capitalism, is clear confirmation of that.

Chapter Four

THOMAS JEFFERSON: ENLIGHTENER AND STATESMAN

Thomas Jefferson is one of the most contradictory and controversial of the American Founding Fathers. Europeans consider him, along with Benjamin Franklin, to be among the most educated and enlightened men of his time. He was the forefather of democratic ideological-political tradition in the US, dreaming of establishing a republic of small independent landowners, educating the masses and setting up direct government by the people. However, he also got along quite well with the slaveowners of large plantations, a group to which he himself belonged. Standing in opposition to the Federalists in the 1790s, he harshly criticized Hamilton and acquired recognition as the head of the Jacobin Party. But upon assuming the presidency in 1801, he observed in conciliatory fashion: "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists," and adopted a number of federalist notions. Jefferson's ideals and deeds often contradicted one another, and should be carefully analyzed.

Many American historians, for example, Claude Bowers, Adrienne Koch, Vernon Parrington and Saul Padover,¹ are themselves convinced and assure their readers that Jefferson reflected the very essence of the national democratic dream, and have proclaimed him the "apostle of Americanism." In Parrington's well-known work, *Main Currents in American Thought*, Jefferson and Hamilton are described as America's good and evil geniuses. The modern reader

will, however, regard with scepticism Parrington's comment in the beginning of his book: "The point of view from which I have endeavored to evaluate the materials, is liberal rather than conservative, Jeffersonian rather than Federalistic; and very likely in my search I have found what I went forth to find, as others have discovered what they were seeking."²

Other American historians, for example Dumas Malone, the author of a recently published five-volume biography which extolls Jefferson's life, find not so much democratic as liberal traits in his thought. A third group, among them Charles Beard, Richard Hofstadter and Thomas Abernethy,³ and also the writer Gore Vidal, whose novel *Burr*⁴ describes the life of Jefferson's unsuccessful rival, maintain that though he proclaimed to defend small farmers, Jefferson in fact represented the interests of the plantation owners.

Some biographers of Jefferson prefer to ignore the contradictions and offer an embellished version of the life of this Founding Father. For example, the venerable American historian Richard Morris wrote an "everyman's" biography of Jefferson that was published a few years before the American bicentennial and asked that other historians, "young men," as he called them, not take it too seriously.⁵ But turning away from a principled approach will certainly not solve the problem.

A Provincial Childhood

Thomas Jefferson began to write his memoirs at the age of seventy-seven. He had little information about his ancestors, writing that the Jeffersons came to North America from Wales. The only thing Thomas knew about the Jeffersons of Wales was where they lived: at the foot of the highest peak in Great Britain—Snowdon. The most distant ancestor Jefferson was able to attain reliable information about was his grandfather, also named Thomas. But he knew no details about his grandfather's life or his two elder sons.

The pertinent facts in the life of Peter Jefferson, his father, are also sparse. Born in 1707 or 1708, at the age of 22 he married 19-year-old Jane Randolph. Peter and his wife built a family home in western Virginia and called it Shadwell after a church in London where Jane had been christened. Peter Jefferson never received a formal education but being incredibly gifted became broadly knowledgeable, to the extent that he was once asked, together with Joshua Fry, a professor at William and Mary College, to draw up the first map of Virginia and also to settle the extremely difficult boundary dispute between Virginia and Maryland. Jefferson's father died on August 17, 1757, leaving six daughters and two sons, and bequeathing his elder son, Thomas, the lion's share of the family holdings.

Jefferson's biographers have significantly filled out his family tree. It was discovered that the family name was written in Virginia colonial records as early as the first half of the 17th century, practically at the very beginning of the North American colonization period. Jefferson's first undisputed American ancestor was his great-grandfather, who settled in Henrico County, Virginia, in the latter half of the 17th century. By Virginian standards of the time, he was an important figure. A land surveyor in the county, he witnessed the wills of neighboring farmers and plantation owners, and in the name of the colonial authorities, handed out awards for killing wolves which posed a serious threat to Virginian livestock owners. Jefferson's great-grandfather's name is mentioned in Virginian records no less than fifty times.

Jefferson's grandfather achieved even more prominence. In 1714, at the age of 37, he became a justice of the peace, and somewhat later acted as the sheriff of Henrico County, i.e. in the eyes of his neighbors, represented colonial authority. The records indicate that he held yet another honorary title—captain of the county militia.

Jefferson's grandfather had three daughters and two sons. The elder son died in 1700 at the age of 25, thus the second son, Peter, Thomas's father, be-

came the main heir to the family property. According to Captain Jefferson's will, which was made in 1725, Peter inherited no less than half the family's wealth, while his three sisters had to divide the second half. Such was the custom in colonial Virginia, which was reminiscent of the feudal system in the Old World.

Meticulous biographers have fixed the date of Peter Jefferson's birth—February 29, 1708—though it remained unknown to his own son, and discovered that he was a worthy representative of his clan, successfully continuing the family's rise up the Virginian social ladder.

Peter Jefferson decided to move to western Virginia where there were unlimited opportunities to acquire vast tracts of arable land. He obtained almost 1250 acres not far from the Appalachian Mountains and energetically began to work the virgin soil. When he was not working, Peter would often visit the neighboring landowners. He became especially friendly with William Randolph, who owned exactly twice as much land as Peter. Peter's marriage to Randolph's daughter, Jane, made him one of the most influential people in western Virginia.

Though he cannot be exactly considered an outstanding individual, Peter Jefferson nonetheless differed in many respects from his neighbors. For example, he was much more learned: when he died he left his children not only slaves and land but 42 thick books, including histories and political works. The reader may think this a very modest number, but it was a very impressive library by contemporary standards. Most Virginians had no more than two or three books. In the eyes of Peter's neighbors, who for the most part limited themselves to reading the Old and New Testament, he was considered somewhat of a philosopher.

But despite his erudition and comparatively broad views, Peter Jefferson was a typical Virginian plantation owner. He industriously pursued the acquisition of wealth, and by the time of his death owned 7500 acres of land. He did not work his property him-

himself or hire laborers to do so: Peter Jefferson's fields were worked by black slaves bought from British merchants or neighboring plantation owners. Shadwell was run by black servants who were at the beck and call of their owners. Thomas Jefferson's earliest recollection is being carried, at the age of three, to a carriage harnessed for a trip to the Randolph estate. Peter Jefferson owned more slaves—53—than books.

What is it that determines an individual's character, his outlook on life: family? upbringing and environment? education and tutors? social conditions and epoch? In Jefferson's case this question is especially important, for he thought, dreamed and often acted against the interests of the plantation owner upper crust to which he himself by birth belonged. What formed Jefferson's egalitarian views, what caused him to spurn the interests of his own class and initiate programs of democratic renewal in North America? Certainly not his family, nor his teachers nor the planter community. His life and world outlook reflect the contradictions of American reality and the unique historical epoch in which he lived, an epoch that has come to be known as the Age of Enlightenment, Reason and Revolution.

American reality of the 18th century was fraught with contradictions. Social stratification, with men divided into rich landlords and planters and slaveowners, and black slaves and white indentured servants, had taken root along the narrow strip of colonies near the Atlantic. Yet just a hundred miles, and sometimes not even that far, from the flourishing plantations and large farms the law of the American frontier reigned. Here every white settler was his own man and democratic norms and customs prevailed.

The territory of Virginia was so vast and the need for a work force so great that local authorities allocated 20 hectares of land to each plantation owner who attracted a new settler from Europe. However, the free settlers who arrived in North America had no desire to work for the plantation owners, who subsequently turned to indentured servants—white workers

sold to the American bourgeoisie for a term of three to seven years. These contract workers were mostly shady characters or downright criminals, vagabonds and déclassé elements from British cities. But they also included energetic, enterprising men who, upon receiving their freedom, seized plots of land and began to successfully compete with their former masters. The plantation owners gradually came to prefer as a work force the black slaves who were brought to North America in huge numbers by British merchants.

The first black slaves appeared in North America as early as 1619 — a year before the pious Puritans, who naively suggested that slavery was incompatible with the Holy Scripture, arrived on the *Mayflower*. By the time of Thomas Jefferson's birth, slaveownership had become the basis of the plantation economy in Virginia, Georgia, Maryland and North and South Carolina. Slaveowners already thought of themselves as an elite class and accrued as much wealth as British landlords. Their plantations stretched across thousands of acres of land and were worked by dozens, sometimes hundreds of black slaves. The plantation owners affected the manners and ways of the European nobility.

Imposing planter mansions dotted the Atlantic coast. But the further inland one moved, the scarcer they became, disappearing in the deep western region. This was another Virginia altogether: here the less successful and wealthy plantation owners, small farmers, tenants and former indentured servants rushed to acquire land and seek their fortune. These western settlements possessed a much greater democratic spirit than the Atlantic coast. True, social differentiation existed in the frontier region as well. Resettled plantation owners and rich farmers gradually acquired political authority and enforced their will upon the poor whites. Nonetheless, relations and social structure in the West were simpler and less constricted than in the East. Here the people dressed and ate more modestly, and there were fewer slaves and poor. Here, too, the lifestyle was cruder: the

frontier lived in tales of drunken tavern fights and bloody encounters with Indians.

The Jeffersons' estate was situated on a strip of land between the East and West, but was much closer to the frontier than to the Atlantic coast. As a child, Thomas Jefferson was influenced by the folklore, lifestyle and customs of the American West. Like all boys, he was especially interested in exciting and colorful stories and adventures, particularly those about frontiersmen and Indians. Thomas not only heard about them from his elders, he often saw them at Shadwell. The customs, clothing, appearance and behavior of Indians remained engraved in his memory throughout his life and acquired a hint of romanticism.

Relations between the American colonists and Indians were far from ideal. The path of the pious Puritans who made their way West was strewn with the bodies of the natives. But every rule has its exception: Peter Jefferson and his family maintained the best possible relations with the Indian tribes. On their way to Williamsburg, Virginia's administrative center, Indian emissaries often stopped at Shadwell. And at these times it was impossible to drag Thomas away from the guests. Bronze-skinned, exhibiting exotic tattoos, their faces framed by splendid feathers, the Indians seemed to him to be demigods who had descended from the mysterious and as yet unapproachable Appalachians.

Born on April 13, 1743, Thomas was the eldest son of Peter Jefferson. In accordance with custom, he would be the principal heir of the family wealth. And to ensure that this wealth would come into worthy hands, Peter Jefferson spared no means in providing his son with an education.

Thomas's studies began when the boy was five years old. Until the age of seventeen, he was instructed by private tutors: first the minister William Douglas and then Reverend James Maury. These clergymen were quite dissimilar and each influenced Jefferson in a different way.

Unless they were incredibly lazy, Virginian ministers tried to augment their sparse church income by

combining their religious duties with teaching, which was much more lucrative. Here and there they opened parish schools and placed in the local newspapers announcements of the following type: "Reverend John Smith proposes to teach Ladies and Gentlemen the French, Latin, Greek and English languages, Algebra, Geometry, Mechanics, Navigation, Fortification, Gunnery and the use of the Globes and Maps, after a natural, easy and concise method, without Burden to the Memory." Such announcements did not promise any end results, but they did display the enterprising ability of the clergymen.

Thomas Jefferson was most unfortunate with his tutor William Douglas, who was poorly educated. But the young man's second tutor, Reverend James Maury, was one of the most erudite Virginians of his time. For Thomas, his tutor's personal library of more than 400 books represented a treasury of knowledge containing all the information of the world. During the three years of tutelage under Maury, Jefferson learned Latin, Greek, French and Italian and studied the sciences. By the time he was 17 he was fully prepared to enter the College of William and Mary, the pride of Virginians and, in their opinion, the best institute of learning in North America.

By European standards of the time Williamsburg was a remote little town. But in the eyes of Americans, let alone Virginians, it was a cultural as well as political center. Several years before Jefferson arrived in Williamsburg, the city's residents had built a new theater. They had first become acquainted with dramatics in 1716 when actors from New York and London began to perform plays by Corneille, Shakespeare and Molière on the Williamsburg stage. As yet Williamsburg had no professional acting company, but the students formed the Players of William and Mary College and performed the same plays staged by professionals in London. Moreover, the city residents themselves formed their own amateur group, the Virginian Company of Comedians, and the healthy rivalry between the two companies improved the quality of theatrical spectacles. From the

beginning of his student career, Jefferson was an habitual theater-goer.

Williamsburg's cultural life was not confined to the performances of professional and amateur actors at the local theater. The governor and other city fathers often gave concerts and balls at their homes, and the city published a newspaper. In fall, when the assembly met, the city was especially lively: the *Virginia Gazette* ran daily announcements concerning entertainment events. Students at William and Mary found it difficult to allot time for theology, classical and modern philosophy as well as spending hours in Raleigh Tavern.

College regulations at William and Mary frowned upon outside activities that took the students away from their studies. They were forbidden to waste time in attending parties or horse races, where spectators were obliged to bet, or to arrange any kind of competition among themselves. The rules categorically forbade playing cards and drinking, and the young men were reprimanded for lying, swearing or rudeness. The college was preparing not only ministers and lawyers but well-bred gentlemen.

After his first few months at college Thomas discovered that the consequences of breaking college regulations were not so dire and could even be avoided altogether. He was not a "do-gooder," and quickly joined in the students' diversions. Jotted in his notebook were such comments as, "Won 1/6 pounds shooting," "Lost 5/9 pounds on the races in Charlottesville." Freed from the watchful eye and moral admonishments of his mother, Thomas discovered traits in himself that not only his family but he himself had never suspected. He attended balls and found he liked to look at the pretty young daughters of local merchants, plantation and ship owners. Rebecca Burwell, a pretty sixteen-year-old girl, caught his eye at one ball and became the object of his first and, alas, unrequited love.

Nevertheless, the most important thing in Jefferson's life as a student was his daily, exhausting study, and he gradually gave himself over to his books en-

tirely. He had decided to study law, and fate was to decree this a propitious choice by bringing him into contact with one of the brightest minds in Williamsburg, George Wythe. With his short, stocky frame and large head, the gnome-like Wythe was one of the most influential personages in colonial Virginia. Seeking legal counsel at his office in the center of Williamsburg, directly opposite the Governor's mansion, were wealthy plantation owners, merchants, moneylenders and proprietors. Thomas entered Wythe's office as a mere student, and after his first meeting with the lawyer, thought him the Cato of Virginia. Within a few months teacher and pupil had become close friends, and Thomas took to speaking of Wythe as his "foster father" and "most affectionate friend."

In turn, Wythe was impressed with Jefferson's ability and inquisitiveness, and quickly realized that unlike other students, Thomas was not satisfied with practical advice; he was determined to delve to the fundamentals of jurisprudence. Jefferson thought of Law as the crown of the tree of knowledge, which was fed by the roots of the fundamental sciences. Sharing his views with his friend John Page, Jefferson stated that before turning to Law one must have a thorough knowledge of Latin, Greek and French. Then it was necessary to develop mathematical thinking and associative reasoning. And for this one must study mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and geography. And of course no one could really consider himself a lawyer without a deep understanding of natural law, rhetoric, critical analysis and the art of public speaking.

Thus, Jefferson set himself a difficult task worthy of the daring aspirations of eighteenth-century ideologists and enlighteners—to gain a thorough understanding of all the sciences and the most advanced theories and doctrines. Since it was necessary to study fifteen to sixteen hours every day, he devised a rigid schedule, dividing his work time into five parts. From six till eight in the morning, Thomas studied the natural sciences. He read every book he could obtain in Williamsburg on anatomy, geography,

botany, zoology and chemistry. In keeping with the spirit of the times, he considered the natural-law doctrines of the Enlightenment to be a natural science, and therefore spent his morning hours also reading the works of Locke, Condorcet, Hume and Harrington on normative relations between people in the pre-civil society, i.e. in the "state of nature."

The European philosophers maintained that there was no division of people into monarchs, nobles, priests and commoners in the "state of nature." All individuals were endowed with equal natural rights, which disappeared only after the formation of the state. Jefferson understood the teachings of the European free thinkers as a protest against the arbitrary rule of absolute monarchs, privileges of the aristocracy and clergy and the servile position of the third estate, which included not only peasants and artisans but also merchants, workshop and manufactory owners.

Musing over the cogitations of the European philosophers, Jefferson came to the unexpected conclusion that the "state of nature" was much like the life of the Indians. And if this were so, then tribal life must be acknowledged as the social ideal. Thomas was astounded at his unorthodox conclusion. He did not share in the contempt for Indians common to the time. But, reasoned the young disciple of natural law, if the tribal life of the Indians represented the ideal natural state, then did the mores and relations of white Americans portend the dusk of human history? Then how to rationalize such a conclusion with the obvious fact that, with their knowledge of the world and creative ability, white Americans had surpassed the Indians? On the other hand, there was no slavery in Indian society, or division of people into rich and poor. The contradictions mounted in Jefferson's head, and the more he studied the West European philosophers and compared them with surrounding reality, the more questions arose—complex, eternal questions: what is the social ideal, progress, truth?

From eight in the morning until noon, Thomas studied modern law, especially the works of the

Englishmen Edward Coke and William Blackstone, who had achieved recognition as theoreticians on the British constitution and regarded the Law as an antidote to government tyranny. Jefferson swallowed entire passages from the works of British jurists.

The third part of Jefferson's day, from twelve until one in the afternoon, was allotted for the study of political questions. His reference books on this subject included the works of Algernon Sidney, Hugo Grotius, Jean Jacques Burlamaqui, Thomas Hobbes, James Harrington, Charles Montesquieu and John Locke. In studying them, Thomas learned the principles of representative government, separation of powers, checks and balances. By the end of his study he could recite from memory any passage from Locke's *Treatises on Government* and Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*.

From one in the afternoon until five in the evening, Jefferson spent time with Plutarch, Herodotus, Milton, Gibbon, and other eminent classical and modern historians. He was fascinated with the histories of the lives and exploits of Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Henry VIII and Oliver Cromwell, the tyrants and the tyrant-fighters. The Italian Giambattista Vico illuminated Jefferson's understanding of historical progress, while Machiavelli helped him comprehend the psychological motives and sources of political actions. The world of history captivated Thomas; he himself wanted to try his hand at describing the fate of people and nations, the more so since Virginia was still in need of a chronicler.

From five until seven in the evening Jefferson relaxed a bit and then resumed his studies. This time was devoted to oratory and rhetoric and reading classical literature. Demosthenes and Cicero, naturally, served as his models for oratorical skills, while the tragedies of Shakespeare provided insight into the secrets of man's nature.

His persistent study—Jefferson would later note with pride that he boldly sought knowledge—paid off. Soon after making Jefferson's acquaintance, George Wythe realized he was not only an apt stu-

dent but a worthy partner in conversation who was capable of a more profound analysis of many questions than Wythe himself and could even edify his teacher.

Wythe introduced Jefferson to Williamsburg high society. Together with Governor Francis Fauquier, who was distinguished for his liberal views and aspirations to the title of Virginia's "enlightened monarch," and college Professor William Small, they formed their own select philosophical circle, which met regularly at the home of Fauquier to freely discuss the newest scientific ideas and philosophical doctrines. As Jefferson would later recall, "truly Attic societies" met in provincial Virginia. In trying to imitate classical elitist society and its quest for harmony, when tired of discussing Greek and Roman law, the Williamsburg philosophical circle formed an amateur orchestra. Jefferson, who played the violin quite well, fitted right in.

Thomas studied with Wythe for five years and then began his own lawyer practice, which was successful from the start. Jefferson's clientele grew remarkably fast: in 1767 he participated in 68 court cases, and in 1769–200. But judging from the fact that he received only one-third of his fees, he did not limit himself to defending the very wealthy. In fact, he defended the interests of different groups: one of his first defendants was a mulatto.

Jefferson's defense of the mulatto boy was long remembered by his fellow Virginians. The day after the young lawyer presented his case in court, his unorthodox arguments, having stirred up considerable controversy, were being widely discussed among the citizens of Virginia. Those who, in accordance with English tradition, termed themselves Whigs, fervently supported Jefferson, while their opponents—Tories—thought the young lawyer's speech seditious.

Jefferson first addressed the court by concisely reviewing the case at hand. Sixty-five years ago a white woman had entered into relations with a black slave and subsequently gave birth to a mulatto boy.

In accordance with Virginian law, she had been sentenced to slavery until she reached 31 years of age. As a slave, she gave birth to a mulatto girl, who in time gave birth to a son, also a mulatto. This boy, whose interests Jefferson was defending, had been separated from his mother and sold to another owner.

In reading through the legislative acts of Virginia, Jefferson could not find a single resolution sanctioning this kind of sale. The question Jefferson posed was what laws could be enforced without corresponding civil legislation? Drowsy from the long court session, the judges started at the unexpected question. And the young lawyer's following remarks roused them completely from their somnolent state.

According to Jefferson, in a case such as this, one could unhesitatingly rely on natural law. If the child's mother were by law of nature a slave, then, consequently, her son, too, would be a slave. But according to natural law, all people are born equal; at birth, each is endowed with the innate right to be his own master, which includes freedom of movement. This right, known as individual freedom, is bestowed upon each individual by nature itself and its Creator. In his summation Jefferson stated that making the mulatto boy and his mother slaves contradicted the law of nature and that the court had no right to pass a sentence which contravened the innate right of the defendant.

The judges were shocked. What did Jefferson mean by "law of nature," "all people are created equal," "individual freedom" of mulattoes? These were dangerous and subversive ideas, even if they were reinforced by references to Edward Coke and Blackstone. The mulatto boy defended by Jefferson was returned, still a slave, to his new owner.

Though Jefferson had been soundly defeated, the case was not lost in vain. The Virginia court had heard a lawyer of impeccable character and deep convictions speak clearly and eloquently on life and politics. A provincial Virginian by birth, Jefferson faced the Virginian court as a son of the Enlightenment.

Patrick Henry



Growing Fame

From the start of the British-American conflict Jefferson unswervingly supported the patriots' cause. In May 1765 he heard Patrick Henry's impassioned speech in the Virginian Assembly. A gifted speaker, Henry demanded that George III learn by the experience of Charles I. Jefferson could not compete with Henry in eloquence, but this did not stop him from reflecting on the contradictions between the colonies and the British Government and increasingly speaking out in support of the patriots.

In 1769 Jefferson was elected the deputy from Albemarle County to the Virginian Assembly. In keeping with tradition in North American provinces, Jefferson proposed a number of political resolutions to the county voters, who, not bothering to ascertain the gist of the document, voted to have it accepted as their mandate to the Assembly. In May 1769 Jefferson took his Albemarle resolutions before the Virginian Assembly as a deputy of the Chamber of Burgesses.

Jefferson's resolutions sounded very radical, but no more so than those of Patrick Henry. This time,

too, Henry was the hero of the day in the Virginian Assembly. He had achieved popularity even beyond Virginia; moreover, he clearly surpassed Jefferson in oratory. A member of the Virginian Assembly later observed: "Mr. Jefferson drew copiously from the depths of the law. Mr. Henry from the recesses of the human heart." Jefferson was better-read and educated and more scholarly, but Henry's speeches were more emotional, caustic and burning.

Jefferson felt no personal rivalry, however, in the face of the common enemy and unhesitatingly supported any deputy if his demands were in keeping with the goals of the patriotic movement. Henry, on the other hand, was markedly jealous of the young, capable deputy from Albemarle. Jefferson felt the full brunt of the famous orator's jealousy in 1774 when he proposed that an extraordinary session of the Virginian Assembly consider his unprecedentedly daring, even for the radicals, series of resolutions. Jefferson had spent several weeks working on the resolutions so that in the end they were developed into a pamphlet filled with brilliant arguments. Unfortunately, Jefferson was unable to himself present his resolutions before the deputies in the Virginia House of Burgesses as en route to Williamsburg from his family estate (where he had written the resolutions) he was stricken with dysentery, a common ailment at that time. Thomas gave his servant two copies of the resolutions and charged him to deliver them to the Assembly without fail. One copy was for the Speaker, Peyton Randolph, and the other for Patrick Henry. Jefferson hoped that these two influential deputies would see to it that his resolutions were given utmost publicity.

As Jefferson later discovered, Henry had no intention of passing his pamphlet among the deputies and did not even take the time to thoroughly acquaint himself with it. Jefferson was extremely hurt by this action, writing: "Whether Mr. Henry disapproved the ground taken, or was too lazy to read it (for he was the laziest man in reading I ever knew) I never learned but he communicated it to nobody." After this

episode, the relationship between Patrick Henry and Jefferson remained strained and even flared into open enmity. However, this did nothing to interfere with Jefferson's rapidly rising popularity among the patriots. After carefully reading Jefferson's pamphlet Peyton Randolph suggested it be published. *Summary Views of the Rights of British America* was published not only in North America but in Britain and made Jefferson a well-known figure on both sides of the Atlantic. American patriots appreciated his fervent and bold style and began to speak of him as a new ideological leader among the colonists. London's reaction was quite different: the British Parliament considered him an extremely dangerous seditious and included his name on a list of people to be extradited for trial in Britain. This decision was not carried out, but Jefferson was now closely watched by colonial authorities.

Jefferson's pamphlet was addressed to George III. Stating that the King's will was the only tie that bound Britain and America, Jefferson tenaciously argued the point that through his unreasonable actions George III had diminished to the breadth of a hair the binding thread between the two parts of the Empire. Jefferson sharply accused the British monarch of usurping the right of possession of uninhabited lands, dissolving assemblies, quartering military troops in the provinces and many other abuses which undermined the principles of sovereignty of the people and representative government. In the form of an ultimatum he demanded that George III unquestioningly sign all the assemblies' decisions as kings signed acts of Parliament in Britain. Jefferson was willing to accept only a monarch who "reigned" but did not "govern." He called on the British King to accept full responsibility for the fate of the empire and, at the same time, not to consider himself its omnipotent lord but to remember that it was only good fortune that had brought him to power.

Not only was Jefferson the first patriot to so sharply criticize the monarchy and express the idea of home rule in such an extreme form, he also broached

a new topic of discussion—democratic reforms in North America. In this he was taking on both the British monarch and the American plantation-owner class, choosing the side of those with little or no property with regard to the agrarian question, which would play so important a role in the future of the provinces. Jefferson declared that the so-called supreme right of the Crown to uninhabited lands was fraudulent and reminiscent of the uncivilized mores of the feudal past, and urged that each American be granted the opportunity to occupy and work the land.

Jefferson's agrarian concept was shaped into its final form just before North America declared independence. It was included in the draft Virginian constitution, which Jefferson prepared in June 1776. Whereas in his 1774 pamphlet Jefferson spoke of the equal right of all Americans, rich or poor, to appropriate uninhabited land, in the draft Virginian constitution he accorded this right exclusively to citizens with little or no property. The draft provided for turning all unoccupied land into social property which was to be divided into 50-acre lots and granted to those individuals owning less acreage.⁶ In this way, uninhabited land would cease to be an object of buying and selling, and the wealthy class, including planters and slaveowners (to which Jefferson himself belonged) would be denied access to it. It was Jefferson's democratic idea to develop the territories the United States would annex as republican communities of small independent farmers. In the draft constitution, Jefferson the progressive thinker was acting in the interests of those Americans with little or no property, giving ideological shape to their goals.

By the beginning of the North American colonies' War of Independence, Jefferson had matured as a statesman, thinker and, of course, as an individual. His marriage in 1772 to Martha Skelton played not an insignificant part in this process. Martha, unlike most young Virginian ladies, was well-educated and well-read, and could hold her own in a discussion

James Duane



on abstract philosophical themes. But it was her musical ability that finally won Jefferson's heart. On the first day they met they formed a duet with Martha singing beautifully while Thomas accompanied her on the violin.

After their marriage, Thomas and Martha settled at Monticello, the home Jefferson had designed himself and started to build in 1769. Nine months later, their first child, a daughter, was born and named Martha. In the next several years Martha would bear Thomas five more children. But the happy moments of birth were accompanied by the tragedy of loss—of the six children only two daughters survived: Martha, the first-born, and Mary, who was born in 1778. Monticello was still not entirely built when a small family graveyard appeared on the grounds, and Jefferson, who constantly felt the presence of Monticello in his heart no matter how far away he was from home, grew even more attached to the family estate.

In March 1775 Jefferson was elected a delegate to the Continental Congress. Arriving in Philadelphia, where the Congress had convened at the end of April, a few days after the battles of Concord and Lexington, he was immediately made a member of the

commission whose task it was to prepare a "Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms." President of the Continental Congress took Jefferson under his protection, praising the Virginian as a remarkable stylist and erudite man who knew French, Italian and Spanish and would soon learn German. Awed by the young Virginian's learning, the deputies at once included him as a member of the commission.

It was a matter of utmost urgency to formulate the reasons the Americans had been forced to resort to arms: the colonists had been engaged in an armed struggle against the royal army for more than a month yet the goals of their struggle had not been determined. First, John Rutledge of South Carolina was given the task, but he failed miserably: the delegates disliked both the contents and the style of his draft.

Jefferson wrote his version quickly, correlating its proclaimed objectives with the general line of thought of the delegates. The primary goal of the colonists' armed resistance was stated as being the restoration of their economic and political rights which had been violated by imperial authorities. The document insisted that Americans be granted the same rights and liberties as the British, but unequivocally denied they were seeking state independence. Jefferson handed his draft over for criticism to John Dickinson, the most authoritative member of the commission.

Dickinson told Jefferson to mitigate or omit altogether such words as "tyranny," "despotism" and "bloody." After the changes Dickinson recommended were made, Jefferson's document was unanimously approved by the Continental Congress. Jefferson realized that the moderates were most influential in the Congress and had to console himself with the fact that he had done everything he could to reflect the thoughts of radicals in his document. Historians would later conclude that this document was a harbinger of the Declaration of Independence, which was written a year later.

The lull in congressional activities during the latter

half of 1775 did not help to dispel Jefferson's anxiety at receiving no letters from home, where he had left his ailing mother, wife and daughters. Also, he had heard the alarming rumor that the British were to land in Virginia at any moment. Unable to endure the absence of news any longer, Jefferson quickly headed for home in late December.

Anxious to return to Monticello as soon as possible, Jefferson made the trip without stopping, as if he had a foreboding that all was not well. And he was right: his eighteen-month-old daughter, Jane, died the day after he arrived home. Jefferson grieved along with his wife, and plunged himself into caring for family affairs. He became extremely concerned for the health of his delicate wife, who was more precious to him than anything, and his invalid mother required constant attention.

Back in Virginia, Jefferson was saddened to learn that in the midst of his troubles, his ties with his mother's family, the Randolphs, would be severed, for they had sided with the British. John Randolph was the first to leave Virginia. He and Jefferson had once shared a warm friendship and even jokingly wrote in their wills that if John should die, Thomas would inherit his violin; and if Thomas should die, John would acquire his books. Jefferson bid farewell to John not without regret, and asked him to leave his violin as a memento of their friendship. John Randolph did leave Thomas his musical instrument, but for a price.

Jefferson suffered another blow at the end of March when his mother died. Afterwards he was incapacitated with severe headaches that lasted until early May, at which time he immediately set out for Philadelphia, where America's independence had been proclaimed.

Arriving in Philadelphia, Jefferson, again, was immediately included as a member of the commission that would write a document of extraordinary political importance—the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson, of course, was well known among the patriots, but it was an unexpected honor and stroke of

good fortune to be personally selected to compose the document.

This was Jefferson's moment of glory. Even if he had retired from politics completely after writing the Declaration, his place in history would have been secure. The US War of Independence is thought of everywhere in the world in the terms of the Declaration of July 4, 1776, which became the symbol of the American Revolution. The world-celebrated Declaration has glorified Jefferson as the intellectual leader of the revolution. But other Founding Fathers also dreamed of this honor and glory.

The Declaration Committee included, for example, John Adams, the most ambitious Founding Father who never reconciled himself to what he considered was Jefferson's unmerited success. At the beginning of the 19th century he suddenly announced that Jefferson had copied the Declaration from a pamphlet written by James Otis. Another member of the Declaration Committee, Richard Henry Lee, was also irritated by Jefferson's fame, and in 1823 he publicly declared that the Declaration was nothing more than an abridged version of John Locke's famous *Treatises on Government*. Jefferson responded to the criticism with uncharacteristic modesty, stating that it had not been his objective "to invent new ideas and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before"; he had merely tried to express "the American mind."⁷

Why had the delegates to the Congress selected Jefferson over Adams, who, at that time, had unquestionably done much more for the patriotic movement? Perhaps they were struck by the young Virginian's outer appearance: tall and erect, his proudly held head framed by wavy hair, Jefferson was certainly more attractive than the short, stout and balding Adams. But another member of the Declaration Committee, Benjamin Franklin, who personified nobility, wisdom and erudition, was just as well-liked. Moreover, Franklin was known throughout Europe; were he to write the Declaration, the document would acquire world importance. But Franklin



The Declaration Committee. Right to left: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, Roger Sherman, and John Adams

was more than twice Jefferson's age; the young, energetic Virginian seemed to embody the youth of the revolution and American nation, and even his democratic leanings corresponded to the youthful, vigorous revolutionary spirit. Only he could write the Declaration; it was to be his, not Adams's or Fran-

klin's, moment of glory.

Though Jefferson made no pretense at originality in setting down the ideas of the Declaration, the document was accorded a specific place in the development of revolutionary ideology and in a number of important respects served to promote democratic ideological traditions in the US.

The Declaration's ideological principles are significant in two ways: they represent the culmination of anticolonial thought and determine the democratic parameters of the United States' internal political transformations. The document combines the idea of an anticolonial revolution with that of a democratic revolution in domestic politics.

The Declaration became the patriots' first document in which the rights of Americans were stated to be based solely on the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." This signified a radical departure from the past and the refusal to abide by colonial charters and the British constitution. As opposed to previous anticolonial thought, the Declaration defined the contractual basis for a state in new terms corresponding to the republican ideal. Already in 1775 Alexander Hamilton, among other patriots, had come to consider the social contract an agreement between the rulers and the ruled,⁸ which satisfied the Americans' preference for a constitutional monarchy. The Declaration of July 4, 1776 excluded the sovereign from those participating in the social contract and proclaimed that the "just powers" of the government were derived only from the consent of the governed. The Declaration's generalization that every people has the right to independence and national sovereignty was an original contribution to the revolutionary ideology.

Much of the Declaration sets forth accusations against the King and Parliament who are accused of: preventing the Americans from freely disposing of their property; cutting off the colonies' trade and industry; preventing new appropriations of land; refusing to grant the Americans the right to representative government and dissolving provincial as-

semblies and ignoring their decisions. The accusations and demands stated in the Declaration amounted to a detailed program of the bourgeois socio-political revolution, which due to historical causes (it was not feudal bondage but colonial oppression that hindered the capitalist development of North America) developed as a war of independence.

The Declaration's greatness lies in its socio-philosophical thought. In lofty yet understandable language, Jefferson succinctly set forth the credo of Enlightenment: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."⁹

Though the socio-philosophical part is short, it expresses three fundamental doctrines of the Enlightenment: equal natural rights among men; the social contract as the foundation for political power; the right to overthrow a despotic government by revolution (the latter two doctrines are logically connected with the first and ensue from it, for enlightened thinkers considered the social contract and rebellion against tyranny to be man's natural rights as well).

The progressive nature of the Declaration was due to the fact that it reflected the ideological aspirations of the democratic wing of the revolution, the approach of Thomas Paine rather than John Adams, and the document served as a dependable basis for the development of democratic thought in the US.

Jefferson's views on private property which were voiced in the Declaration of Independence significantly influenced future democratic thought in the United States. Jefferson changed Locke's triad of

natural rights—life, liberty and possession of property—which were widely accepted among the patriots, by substituting the pursuit of happiness for the right to property. Many other bourgeois ideologists, beginning with the humanists, had included the pursuit of happiness among the list of natural rights prior to Jefferson. All ideologists of the American patriotic movement—from John Dickinson and Alexander Hamilton to Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine—also recognized this right. The first official document of the American Revolution in which the natural right to the pursuit of happiness is mentioned was the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which was written by George Mason a month before the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. However, like other leaders of the patriotic movement except for Jefferson, Mason placed the right to private property next to the pursuit of happiness.¹⁰

The simplest explanation as to why there is no mention of private property in the Declaration of Independence is that Jefferson did not consider property ownership one of man's natural rights, which was the document's topic of concern. There is much evidence to support the claim that Jefferson considered private property to be a product of historical evolution. American historian Gilbert Chinard, for example, discovered in his research that when Jefferson was asked in 1789 to comment on the draft of the French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, he bracketed only one of the natural rights listed in the document—possession of property.¹¹ Upset by the extremely unequal distribution of land in Europe, Jefferson stated in an earlier letter to James Madison (written in 1785) that "the earth is given as a common stock for man to labour and live on."¹² And in a letter to Isaac McPherson written in 1813, he categorically affirmed that "no individual has, of natural right, a separate property in an acre of land."¹³

Finally, as early as 1774, in his *Summary View of the Rights of British America*, Jefferson clearly expressed the thought that land was, of natural right,

the property of the society as a whole and could not be acquired by individuals circumventing the will of that society.

It is interesting and a source of argument to this day among historians why, in writing the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson altered the natural rights that were most widely accepted in bourgeois ideology and among American patriots. Most American historians, including Carl Becker, Adrienne Koch and Julian P. Boyd, do not consider the matter of principal importance, suggesting that Jefferson's originality was confined to his phraseology of Locke's ideas.¹⁴ The similarity of thought between Jefferson and Locke resulted from the transmutation of certain nuances in Locke's doctrine, specifically, the fact that the English philosopher considered anything and everything, including life itself and man's liberty, in his understanding of property.

A few American historians, among them Gilbert Chinard, Vernon Louis Parrington and Staughton Lynd, believe that the natural legal doctrine of the Declaration of Independence clearly represents a demarcation between American democratic thought and Locke's ideological tradition.¹⁵ In writing that the substitution of the pursuit of happiness for property in the Declaration of Independence indicates a final rupture with the Whig teaching concerning the laws of property passed down to the British bourgeoisie by Locke, Parrington grossly exaggerates the meaning of such a demarcation.

In our opinion, the Declaration of Independence represents not so much a rupture as a departure from Locke's teaching—no more, but certainly no less. Locke's approach to private property as opposed to that of Jefferson and a number of other American enlightened thinkers was that of a bourgeois liberal who revered the absolute freedom of private property and referred to the natural rights doctrine to justify its unlimited accumulation. On the other hand, Jefferson, the enlightened democrat, considered property as a social entity and endowed the state with the right to regulate the extremes

of its free development.

At first glance Locke's teaching on property might appear identical with Jefferson's views. For example, Locke assumed that man initially possessed only his individuality, while natural resources were available for common usage. However, Locke also believed that man's first contact with natural resources immediately transformed them into his private domain. Like King Midas whose touch turned objects to gold, Locke's "natural man" turned everything he touched into his property. Midas ruled a kingdom of gold, the Locke individual—a kingdom of private property. The English philosopher excluded even the possibility of the existence of social property. In his opinion property could originate and multiply only as private property, and therefore any attempt of authorities to limit it contradicted the nature of things.¹⁶

The worship of private property was alien to Jefferson and other enlightened democrats of the United States. It was their opinion that property could remain social property for a long time. They based their views on the social structure of Indian tribes, which served as a model of the "state of nature" for American progressive democrats.¹⁷

Early American democrats also differed from Locke in their conviction of the necessity to wage a legislative battle against poverty and the extremes of economic inequality. These progressive thinkers base their opinion that the state possessed the right to alter the development of private property on the fact that all property was originally social in nature. Benjamin Franklin expressed this idea in categorical form,¹⁸ while Thomas Paine in his treatise *Agrarian Justice* proposed that a national monetary fund be created in Britain by taxing wealthy landowners. Each landless citizen over 21 years of age would receive 15 pounds sterling and every resident aged 50 or older would receive an annual allowance of 10 pounds sterling out of this fund. But Jefferson's egalitarian ideas were more suitable to American circumstances.

It was Jefferson's opinion that the vast tracts of uninhabited western territories offered a remarkable opportunity to give every US citizen the right to own land. He determined that each US citizen with little or no property should receive a minimum of 50 acres of land free. But Jefferson was not content with merely allotting every citizen a minimum amount of property; he also proposed ways in which to limit the property of wealthy landholders. One such suggestion was that the country's uninhabited territories would no longer be sold to promote the wealth of land speculators and planters. Two other proposals suggested abolishing the right of primogeniture that still existed in several North American provinces and the introduction of a progressive land tax.¹⁹ Though he spoke out against stark inequality in landownership, Jefferson did not offer his opinion as to what should constitute maximum landownership. Nor did he support radical levelling: "I am conscious that an equal division of property is impracticable."²⁰

The social ideas of Jefferson and other American democrats were consonant with the views of moderate European egalitarians such as Rousseau and Jacques Pierre Brissot. Like them, American democrats opposed an agrarian law which would redistribute already existing private property along egalitarian principles (this of course did not preclude their approval of confiscating the land of counterrevolutionaries). The American democrats' moderate egalitarianism reflected the specific conditions of economic relations in the US: the country possessed vast uninhabited territories, and it would not be necessary to infringe upon the property rights of planters and wealthy landholders in order to allocate land to others.

Despite the egalitarian nature of American democratic ideology during the revolutionary period and the fact that it was confined to the petty-bourgeois concept of protecting property acquired by labor and limiting large fortunes, it would be incorrect to deny it as an ideology of the lower strata. It would

also be rather nonperceptive to suggest that egalitarianism only defended the interests of the petty bourgeoisie. After all, the manufactory stage of capitalism was characterized by negligible social differentiation among the lower strata, and the petty bourgeoisie and incipient proletarian strata shared a similar economic status and correspondingly similar social psychology and mentality. Thus the egalitarians of the 18th century reflected the ideology of the lower strata as a whole, not just the petty bourgeoisie.

Jefferson's draft Declaration of Independence was submitted to the Continental Congress on July 2, 1776. The brunt of the criticism was against the passage that condemned the slave trade. In the end, it was omitted from the Declaration, but all other major proposals, including the philosophical introduction, were retained.

On July 4 the delegates signed their names to the Declaration. The term "Unanimous Declaration" was, however, misleading: one signature was missing, that of John Dickinson. He was categorically opposed to the revolutionary step the Congress had taken, but, fortunately, his views went unheeded. The retaliation was sweet for Jefferson, who had had to concede to the demands of the conservative Pennsylvanian a year earlier when he composed the Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms.

Between Dream and Reality

In September 1776 Jefferson hastily returned to Monticello. Though his ailing wife's health was a source of concern throughout that year (Jefferson would very nearly panic if Martha's weekly letter arrived even a day late), what drew him home like a magnet was another reason: his burning desire to promote political transformations in his native Virginia.

As a matter of fact, Jefferson's display of local ambition was quite understandable. Practically all the well-known and influential members of the Con-

gress had left Philadelphia at the same time or even earlier: they were seeking their fame in their local capitals. After the proclamation of independence, the leading figures in the American Revolution were eager to write republican constitutions for their own states. As for the British troops, George Washington, that plantation owner with hammer-like fists, would be sure to make short shrift of the redcoats, whom the Continental Army outnumbered by almost two to one.

Throughout the summer of 1776 Jefferson had heard rumors that such influential Virginian families as the Braztons, Pendletons and Randolphs had joined together to block the democratic plans of the rank-and-file patriots. He, too, was anxious to join the fray in the "Republic of Virginia."

Jefferson remained only a few days at Monticello: Martha, it seemed, was not so very ill, and her husband was able to persuade her to accompany him to Williamsburg, where he would participate in heated debates in the legislative assembly. Upon arriving in the city, Jefferson received unexpected and flattering news from Philadelphia: he, Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane had been selected to conduct important diplomatic talks in Europe. Thomas considered the proposal for three days: it would be a great honor to participate in the diplomatic mission; moreover, he would be able to fulfill the dream of his youth and travel throughout Europe. It was a difficult decision, but after discussing the matter with Martha, he informed the Congress that he would refuse the offer. His reasons for refusing were convincing enough: Martha was expecting a baby, and her health needed improving. But the major reason Jefferson turned down the offer was not due to his heightened concern for his wife but because he believed that to leave for Paris while the debate concerning the political future of Virginia was still raging would have amounted to a betrayal of the "Republic's" interests.

In the fall of 1776 Virginia's legislative assembly busily engaged in sharp verbal battles, organized all

sorts of commissions and discussed numerous bills. Jefferson spoke out and proposed a detailed legislative program on all the important issues. But from the start his bills met with the sharp opposition of the aristocratic elite headed by Pendleton. As for his allies, Jefferson could count them on one hand: his old loyal friend and teacher, Wythe, a hot-blooded democrat by the name of George Mason and the youthful but intelligent James Madison.

Jefferson's first legislative step appeared promising: his proposal to eliminate all vestiges of feudalism in land tenure was approved as early as November 1776. But then a deadlock arose. His bill concerning the confiscation of the lands of Loyalists and state appropriation of the western territories was not passed until 1779. But Jefferson had hoped for much more—the free distribution of western land to US citizens owning little or no property. The legislature, however, refused to even hear of this measure. The land was offered for sale to the benefit of slaveowners. It was the opinion of the moderates that the sale of the land was the only reliable means by which Virginia could cover its debts. Jefferson's dream of an egalitarian republic of small independent farmers was crushed against the will of the plantation owner class.

However, in 1776 Jefferson could not foresee the failure of his democratic plans and was therefore brimming with optimism. He placed one controversial bill after another before the Virginia legislature, but it was educational reform that he considered the most important.

Jefferson's steadfast, at times all-consuming interest in educational reform may at first seem misguided. How could educational reform compare, for example, with the revolutionary reorganization of state institutions or agrarian relations? But Jefferson, like all enlightened thinkers of the 18th century, believed that educational reform would provide a reliable foundation for the most daring political and economic transformations.

It was not the mere education and enlightenment of the masses that was important to Jefferson; rather,

he felt that the general education of Virginian citizens could provide the only reliable basis for his sacred dream—sovereignty of the people. Only an educated people, Jefferson never tired of reiterating, could use its political rights in the interests of the common good and justice, a suppressed and ignorant people would inevitably be subjugated to the will of shrewd political demagogues and religious obscurantists. Jefferson sincerely and ardently expressed his thoughts to his friend and teacher, George Wythe: "Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils, and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests and nobles who will rise among us if we leave the people in ignorance."²¹

Jefferson's proposal called for dividing all of Virginia's voting counties into small districts. Each district would offer three years of free schooling where all children would learn reading, writing and arithmetic. Parents would pay for further education. However, each year a district inspector would select the most gifted boys from among poor families and give them the opportunity to continue their studies at county cost. In all, 20 of the most promising pupils would be sent to a district secondary school to study Greek and Latin, geography and mathematics. After two years of study, examinations would be held. The most gifted would attend school another six years, while the rest ended their studies. Upon completing their secondary education, half of the most able and scientific-minded pupils from all families would be selected to study at the College of William and Mary, whose alumni would provide the state with law-makers, politicians, scientists and teachers.

Jefferson had interesting views on education that were typical of the age of Enlightenment. He believed that primary school should lay the foundation for socially useful knowledge. Instead of giving children

the Bible and Gospel to study at an age when they were not yet mature enough to comprehend religious issues, he recommended they put their minds to learning more useful facts from Greek, Roman, European and American history. The children needed, Jefferson believed, to gain an understanding of the primary elements of moral behavior. In secondary school, the emphasis should be on the study of languages. Jefferson maintained that there is a specific period in man's life, roughly from the age of 8 to 15-16, when the spirit and body are not yet strong enough for arduous work. But it is during this period that the memory is most receptive and capable of retaining images. Since the study of languages is first and foremost a function of the memory, it is only logical to try to master the more useful classical as well as modern languages during this rather protracted period. Jefferson did not consider languages an independent science, but he saw in them the necessary means for mastering the sciences.

Among the sciences which he considered essential to study in childhood and youth, Jefferson especially emphasized history, which, he maintained, in giving knowledge about the past, at the same time made it possible to better foresee the future. History allowed one to gain from the experience of other times and peoples; a knowledge of history enabled the people to judge the actions and schemes of politicians, and to thwart the evil designs of their rulers.

Virginian law-makers thought Jefferson's views on education dangerously utopian, and the bill on education he proposed in 1778 was pigeonholed.

Jefferson was as concerned with religion as he was with educational reform. Today one might think Jefferson's suggestions in this area, as in educational reform, quite modest. But it is necessary to remember that in the 18th century, religion had as much influence on the life of society as the combined impact of today's press, radio, television and government propaganda services. And it was this church monopoly on all aspects of life that Jefferson opposed.

Unlike Voltaire, Jefferson was not prepared to

categorically condemn the state church, but he did consider one of the principal goals of the American Revolution to separate the church from the state and introduce freedom of religion.

Jefferson was not an atheist. Rather, like Locke, Rousseau and Radishchev, he thought of himself as a deist, i. e. he believed in the existence of God as an impersonal prime cause of the world, which, having been created, was abandoned to the operation of its own laws. He considered church dogma concerning an anthropomorphic god to be the stuff of tales for children. In a letter to his nephew Peter Carr, Jefferson advised: "Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God... Read the Bible then, as you would read Livy or Tacitus. The facts which are within the ordinary course of nature, you will believe on the authority of the writer, as you do those of the same kind in Livy and Tacitus... But those facts in the Bible which contradict the laws of nature, must be examined with more care, and under the variety of facts... For example, in the book of Joshua, we are told, the sun stood still several hours. Were we to read that fact in Livy or Tacitus, we should class it with their showers of blood, speaking of statues, beasts, etc... On the other hand you are astronomer enough to know how contrary it is to the law of nature that a body revolving on its axis, as the earth does, should have stopped, should not, by that sudden stoppage, have prostrated animals, trees, buildings, and should after a certain time have resumed its revolution, and that without a second general prostration."²²

What Jefferson disliked most was the privileged position that a certain religious group could attain in each American province. He offered the Virginian law-makers hundreds of examples typifying what tragic consequences ensued when a particular denomination became all-powerful. For example, in Massachusetts, where the Calvinist doctrine prevailed, those professing a different faith could be accused of witchcraft or association with the devil. Virginia was under the

control of the Anglican Church, and Quakers, Presbyterians, Methodists and members of other sects who did not accept Anglican dogma were deprived of the right to hold civil, clerical or military positions, file law suits or claim inheritances and could even be imprisoned. True, the colonial statutes which allocated every privilege to the Anglican Church were not always enforced. Nevertheless, in Jefferson's opinion, they should be removed from the code of laws.

Though Jefferson's arguments in favor of freedom of religion were convincing, the influential plantation owners were not moved in the slightest. In their opinion, the "Republic of Virginia" should rest on the pillar of the church, and, consequently, Jefferson's bill on religious freedom was put aside.

At the start of the revolution, Jefferson was deeply disappointed and suffered yet another devastating defeat concerning the issue of slavery. It should be noted that he had optimistically looked to the successful outcome of the antislavery campaign inasmuch as the closer the revolution approached, the stronger the criticism against slavery was heard in the patriotic movement. And there were deep objective reasons why the stand against slavery should develop in the colonies' struggle for independence. In fact, the patriots' advocacy of juridical and political equality between the Americans and British, their appeal to the same natural laws for all people and their criticism of colonial oppression sounded in sharp dissonance with the presence of the most repugnant form of human oppression—slavery—in the provinces themselves. And opponents in Britain were quick to point out the contradiction: how, it was asked, can the Americans claim equality among people when they turn others like themselves into slaves? The development of the colonies' struggle for independence in North America and the increasingly widespread knowledge of the ideas of the Enlightenment served to heighten the criticism against slaveownership.

It was James Otis who, in a pamphlet written in 1764, set the tone of the criticism: concerning the

idea of absolute equality among people in "the state of nature," he sarcastically asked how short curly hair, flat noses, the shape of the face or color of the skin could serve as the basis for turning people into slaves. Following Otis, the eloquent statements against slavery and racism made by Benjamin Rush, Thomas Paine and other patriots epitomized American democratic thought. The idea was growing in the movement for independence that the existence of slavery in the colonies was solely due to the British Crown; that the Americans themselves had long wished to abolish slavery. Thomas Jefferson himself was of this opinion: "The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state."²³

In composing the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson, as he had previously done, laid the entire blame for introducing slavery in North America on the British King. But in the very first discussion on slavery in the Continental Congress it became evident that the southern plantation owners, as well as many northerners who profited from the slave trade, considered it superfluous to continue to feign friendship for the blacks and omitted the clause criticizing black slavery from the draft declaration. At the same time, in Jefferson's native Virginia, the convention discussing the Bill of Rights and the state constitution categorically rejected the principal provision of the independence movement, that all men were created equal. Somewhat later the Virginian courts proclaimed that the affirmation of natural equality among people in the Declaration of Independence did not pertain to free blacks or slaves. It was a bitter time of disillusionment for Jefferson, who had hoped that the blacks would be freed immediately following colonial independence.

Jefferson met with one defeat after another in his clashes with moderate patriot leaders in Virginia. It would seem that his political star would momentarily be extinguished. In fact, the opposite occurred: Jefferson was elected to the highest political posi-

tion—the governorship of Virginia. His election was not as strange as one might think; it revealed a side of his relations with the plantation owner class that we have not yet touched upon.

It is true that a wall existed between Jefferson the enlightener and the plantation owner class; but between Jefferson the politician, Jefferson the man and the Virginian aristocracy, relations were quite different, even intimate. But are not Jefferson the enlightener, Jefferson the politician and Jefferson the man one and the same? It is time we try to answer this question, the key to which lies both in Jefferson's class position and, of course, his philosophy of life, for such a man would necessarily have evolved his own philosophy.

The reader should be advised at the start that we have no grounds for doubting the sincerity of Jefferson's enlightened and democratic principles. He was faithful to the ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution throughout his life. But there is also no reason why we should idealize Jefferson's principles or, for that matter, the ideals of the Enlightenment and 18th-century revolutions. Despite their progressive and revolutionary ring at the time, they remained bourgeois-democratic in content. According to Engels, "This kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie."²⁴ The class nature of the philosophy of the Enlightenment served as the basis for compromise between Jefferson and the American bourgeoisie. So, though Jefferson might be irritated by their torpor and undemocratic ideas, he was willing to fight these vices only within the framework of a bourgeois republic, in other words, that order which was proclaimed by the revolution of 1776. He could not perceive of another, anti-bourgeois revolution.

And of course it was Jefferson's philosophy of life that determined his ability to accept political compromises. By the standards of his time he was a rebel and hero, but history reveals that there are different types of rebels and heroes. Jefferson was not a hero of the Giordano Bruno type, prepared to

burn at the stake to defend the truth. He was more akin to Galileo, for whom he felt, not coincidentally, special understanding. If the situation was very threatening, he was capable of muffling his enlightened ideas. But he never renounced them, and at the first opportunity hastened to hoist the banner of Enlightenment and fight for its principles.

Jefferson was particularly consistent in adhering to democratic political doctrine, above all the concept of popular sovereignty. Unlike the Virginian plantation owners who supported high property qualifications, Jefferson, like Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, Richard Henry Lee and other democrats insisted that the right to vote be granted to all free, adult white males.²⁵

Moreover, he demanded that the constitution and any laws of comparable importance be ratified by direct referendum (the Virginian constitution of 1776 never satisfied him on this point as it was adopted by the legislature in the usual manner). On this question, Jefferson expressed sentiments similar to Rousseau, and considered popular sovereignty single, indivisible and inalienable, and adopted a more radical position than other American democrats who were quite satisfied with a representative form of popular sovereignty. After the revolution Jefferson conceded somewhat on the issue of direct popular sovereignty. He assumed that at the federal level only a representative form of government was possible. But he believed that matters at the city, district and agricultural community level were best settled at meetings of free citizens.

Jefferson's democratic beliefs were often shaken by the political realities of the revolution. For example, the democrats were disheartened by the turn of events in Massachusetts when a public referendum was held in 1780 to ratify the constitution: the voters rejected the 1778 democratic draft, preferring instead John Adams's more moderate-conservative version.

But Jefferson's belief in popular sovereignty was not to be shaken by the outcome in Massachusetts

or other unsuccessful attempts at democracy. It can be stated without exaggeration that Jefferson and other enlightened Americans virtually worshipped the idea of popular sovereignty. Their attitude toward the people and their will was diametrically opposed to that of the moderate-conservative leaders of the revolution. Whereas Hamilton cynically commented that "the people is a big beast" and John Adams wished to transfer all power in the country to an educated political elite, Jefferson unswervingly held to the principle that, as he stated in a letter to George Washington in 1785, the republican freedoms of the United States would be preserved only if they were entrusted to the people themselves. He was prepared to bow to the will of the people: after criticizing the draft federal constitution in 1787, Jefferson nonetheless stated that if the states' ratification conventions, which were democratically elected, approved it, he would obey that decision.²⁶

There were times when the political reality of the young American state and his own personal experience forced Jefferson to reconsider his once-held convictions. At the beginning of the revolution, Jefferson, like all democrats, was much interested in restructuring the classical principle of separation of powers to maximize the authority of the legislative branch at the cost of executive power. In the constitutional drafts of 1776 he transferred to the legislative assembly many of the traditional prerogatives of the executive office, including appointments of all officials. The governor was deprived of the legislative veto and was relegated to the position of an obedient servant to the deputies in the legislatures.

By the end of the War of Independence, Jefferson had significantly altered his views on the relationship between the two branches of power. This was due not so much to the influence of moderates and conservatives but rather as a result of his own highly unsuccessful experience as Governor of Virginia in 1780-1781. It was during this time, when British troops had invaded the state, that Jefferson discovered that he could not implement a single

decision: he was bound hand and foot by the will of the legislative assembly.

In the 1783 draft constitution of Virginia, Jefferson, in an effort to strengthen the independence of the executive office, proposed extending the term of governorship from one to five years. The governor, along with a Revisionary Council, would have limited veto powers over the legislature. He would be Commander in Chief of the state's army and militia and be elected by the entire legislative assembly, not just the lower house. The governor's salary was to be stipulated in a special article and could not be changed by the legislature. Finally, in emergency situations, the governor could dissolve the legislative assembly or have it convene in another city.²⁷

Nevertheless, Jefferson for the most part stood by the state-legal principles of 1776, as was shown during the discussions of the federal constitution in 1787. Jefferson was quite unhappy with two aspects: the absence of a Bill of Rights and the formation, in his opinion, of a stronger than necessary institution of the presidency based on the principle of "indivisible executive power." Jefferson wished to limit the prerogatives of the president by the collegiate will of the executive council and proposed making it impossible for a president to serve more than one term. He believed that if the constitution did not limit the number of terms an individual could be elected president, the federal state would become an elected monarchy.²⁸ (Jefferson's fears were unwarranted—the first American President, George Washington, refused to stand for office a third time and set an important constitutional precedent whereby an individual could not serve more than two consecutive terms as head of the executive office.)

Subjected to even greater changes was the interpretation by Jefferson and other progressive Americans of the right to revolution and the overthrow of an unsuitable government as envisaged in the Declaration of Independence. As the republican order became more established in the country, these men came to the conclusion that the right to revolution

had spent itself in America and retained relevance only in those states where a representative form of government had not been established. In its final form, this point of view was first expressed not by Jefferson but by Thomas Paine in 1786. It was founded on the belief that the republican form in general, and particularly that which existed in America, was the same as sovereignty of the people. Paine argued that inasmuch as the republican form signified the realization of the principle of sovereignty of the people, then the preservation of the right to revolution implied the right of the masses to overthrow that sovereignty.²⁹ It is evident here that Paine is limited by class consciousness in his understanding of the essence of the people's sovereignty and freedom, and this led to his idealization of bourgeois formal democracy. His willingness to idealize the results of the American Revolution are even more apparent in his treatise *The Rights of Man*, in which several passages are virtual panegyrics to the young bourgeois republic.³⁰

Jefferson first expressed his altered views concerning the permissibility of abrogating an outdated social contract by revolution in 1783. In a letter to Edmund Randolph, he insisted that no social contract could be abrogated in its entirety; that only a few separate parts could be replaced following thorough reconsideration. In other words, here was a safeguard for the constitutions of the independent American states. In 1787, while work was in progress on the draft federal constitution, Jefferson declared that the US was the only country in the world which provided the opportunity to reconsider and renew its social contract without resort to arms and by exclusively legal means.³¹

Jefferson did not entirely exclude the possibility of an armed mass uprising in the US. Moreover, the Shays Rebellion, which helped to further develop the democratic aspect of his world outlook, influenced him to evolve in late 1786 and early 1787 the concept of the feasibility of periodic popular uprisings. In more than ten letters Jefferson expressed

his sympathy for rebels and the difficult economic position of farmers in general. Analyzing the experience of the Shays Rebellion, Jefferson made the following important generalizations: the possibility for the American people to defend their rights by force of arms was not a weakness in the country's political system but rather signified its democracy; in a conflict between the people and the government, the people would always be in the right and their rebellion would help reveal and eliminate the wrongdoing of authorities; periodic popular uprisings were acceptable to God and nature and should occur every 20 years in order to cleanse the body of the government from evil abuses of power.³²

Such pronouncements have a definite democratic ring. The recommendation concerning the feasibility of periodic popular uprisings is sometimes equated with the doctrine on the right to revolution, i.e. is identified with the famous concept of the Declaration of July 4, 1776.³³ In reality the right to revolution, the right to overthrow an unsuitable government and replace it with a new power is proclaimed only in the Declaration. After the proclamation of independence, Jefferson limited the goals of these periodic armed manifestations in the US to revealing and eliminating government mistakes. To use his terminology, these small rebellions constituted a form for expressing direct democracy within the framework of the bourgeois republican order in America, which was to exist together with representative democracy and correct its digressions from the principles of popular sovereignty. In other words, Jefferson in effect equated the abstract right to revolution with the right to stage a bourgeois revolution. Neither he nor Paine suggested the possibility of another American revolution after the establishment of the bourgeois republic.

However, Jefferson and Paine did not believe that the federal and state constitutions adopted during the American Revolution would remain unaltered. On the contrary, with respect to this question they remained till the end of their lives true to the democ-

ratic idea concerning the right of each generation to renew its social contract. This concept is expressed in its most complete form in Paine's *The Rights of Man*, where the author asserts that no one generation retains property rights over the next. The dead have no rights, their rights and the contractual expression of these rights—constitutions—should disappear with them. Identical thoughts were expressed at the same time by Jefferson. Often the two men came close to using the same words: Jefferson was convinced that the world belonged to its present inhabitants, that the Creator made the Earth for the living, not for the dead; Paine stated that our concern should be for the living, not the dead. In 1816 Jefferson wrote to Samuel Kercheval that the states' constitutions should be reviewed every nineteen years, in accordance with the frequency of the appearance of a new generation at that time.³⁴ Nevertheless, even in these arguments neither Jefferson nor Paine suggested the possibility of revolutionary ways of changing the social contract and replacing state power in the US.

That American democrats altered their perception of the doctrine of the right to revolution during the War of Independence and the establishment of the United States can be explained only by the idealization of bourgeois-democratic principles which were developed after 1776. In critically judging this idealization, like other delusions and "mistakes" of American democrats, one should consider the historical conditions in which the revolution took place. The American bourgeois-political system, like the socioeconomic foundation of capitalism, was at the time at the stage of formation and progressive development. The inner mechanism of bourgeois democracy, which concealed its innate hypocrisy and vices, had not yet fully developed. American democrats appraised it only on the basis of its attractive forms extolled in the federal and thirteen states' constitutions. It is indicative that, unlike many of their 20th-century descendants, it never occurred to them to be sceptical, much less cynical, of the constitutions' proclaimed principles of sovereignty of the people, separation

of powers, checks and balance, freedoms of speech and the press, the right to assemble, etc. On the contrary, Jefferson, Paine and men like them thought the constitutions of the revolutionary period to be well-constructed documents which provided a reasonable foundation for the triumph of sovereignty of the people. They believed that the people could achieve their goals within the framework of the constitutional system, not in spite of it.

American progressive thinkers, like their European counterparts, believed that the "kingdom of reason" would be established as their principles were implemented. Two centuries later, the faith they placed in a kingdom of reason might seem not only illusory but demagogic. But this is not a correct assumption from a historical point of view. After all, during this time capitalism has passed through the stages of manufactory and machine industry, monopoly and state-monopoly. We should recall Lenin's words: "No selfishness was ... displayed ... by the ideologists of the bourgeoisie; on the contrary, they quite sincerely believed in universal well-being and sincerely desired it."³⁵

Statesman

Jefferson was the only truly distinguished representative of the Enlightenment to achieve the highest state offices—consecutively serving as state governor, Minister to France, Secretary of State, Vice-President and, finally, President of the United States of America. It was as if history decided to test him and verify in practice the principles of the Enlightenment. How did Jefferson stand up to the test?

In May 1779 Jefferson ran for the governorship of Virginia—the state's highest office. He faced two other contenders—the best friend of his youth, John Page, and Thomas Nelson, a little-known politician. After the first round of voting in the legislative assembly, Jefferson had a commanding lead: 55 votes to 38 for Page and 32 for Nelson. Nonetheless, he

did not have a sufficient number to win the office. In the second round, the majority of Nelson's supporters voted for Page. Thomas only narrowly defeated his old friend: 67 votes to 61. But he had enough votes to become the new governor.

Jefferson was full of plans for reform when he took the governorship. He intended to continue his campaign for religious freedom, try to extend voting rights and alter the educational system. The progressive thinker faced many important tasks indeed in his new office.

Unfortunately, readers sympathetic to Jefferson will be disappointed to learn that during his term in office he accomplished relatively little. Years later in writing his autobiography, Jefferson would describe his two-year term as governor in a scant few paragraphs without mentioning even one important political achievement. These two years were to be the most unsuccessful in Jefferson's political life, but he himself was little to blame.

It was precisely at the time when Jefferson assumed Virginia's top executive post that the war between the United States and Britain, which had previously been waged in the northeast, now moved south. There was no time to be concerned with reforms now: the war required the gifts of a military commander, not an enlightener. Unfortunately, Jefferson did not possess such gifts.

The commander of the British army, General George Clinton, moved the war south for a simple reason: as the war had shown, the southern states were more conservative than those in the northeast, which were dominated by farmers and merchants; in the South, the British could try to establish a base with the landowning aristocracy, who were no doubt convinced that the common people would try to use the revolution to limit the aristocrats' economic and political privileges. At first, the British invaded only Georgia and South and North Carolina, but their chief objective was to take Virginia—the heart of the South.

Soon the governor was faced not with many poli-

tical questions but one: how to defend the "Republic of Virginia"? The republic had 50,000 troops grouped into county militias and not more than 4,000 rifles. How could he persuade 50,000 men to do his will; how could he inspire them to sacrifice their lives for Virginia? And how were 4,000 rifles to be distributed among them? Neither Montesquieu nor Voltaire offered any advice on these questions, nor was there any information in the theory of natural law.

The problem of providing the militia with material supplies was extremely acute. The Virginian treasury lacked funds, although the state legislature printed banknotes without restraint. Virtually as soon as the assembly put another million into circulation astronomical market prices soared even faster and, like wild-fire, consumed the greenbacks. Virginian merchants scorned the paper money, preferring to sell grain, clothing and tobacco to the enemy for gold coins. It fell upon the governor to tame the market, inflation and merchants.

It was also Jefferson's task to subdue the secret loyalists who had appeared in the southeastern counties. He needed to bend the Virginian legislature to his will, for the law-makers believed they had the right to control the governor's every move and essentially had him bound hand and foot. Thomas Jefferson the Enlightener could afford to look down in arrogance on General Washington for his inadequate education, but Jefferson the Governor desperately needed the iron will, severity and military-strategic acumen of the Continental Army's Commander in Chief. But Jefferson did not demonstrate these qualities, and as a result began to stumble with every step and turned to Washington for help.

Later Jefferson would think of his two-year term as governor as a nightmare, fixing the most dramatic events in his memory. The worst ordeal occurred in early January 1781. A month before Washington had sent the Virginian Governor the alarming news that the British Navy was sailing to the state's coast. On December 31, 1780 Jefferson, who had been infor-

med that the British were nearing the state, made a fatal error. Sending the small contingent of militia troops which was on hand to the coast, he allowed his fellow citizens to greet the New Year free of apprehension. Only on January 2 did he give the order to call in the state militia. By January 4, only 200 troops had managed to muster in Richmond, which had been made the State's temporary capital. And the enemy was but several miles from the city.

Not daring to offer any resistance to the enemy's superior forces, the governor, legislative assembly and a handful of militia troops retreated from Richmond. The British troops which entered the city on January 5 were led by none other than the infamous traitor Benedict Arnold, on whose head Jefferson had placed a reward of five thousand dollars. Arnold methodically proceeded to destroy public buildings, ransacked and burned warehouses and pulled from the river five artillery pieces which had been thrown there (to prevent them from falling into enemy hands) by the Virginia militia, and then left Richmond.

Jefferson sent Washington a frank report about the military defeat and pleaded for assistance. The General answered Jefferson's request by sending to Virginia a reserve contingent of troops from the Continental Army headed by Marquis de Lafayette. The French Marquis soundly rebuffed a second British assault against Richmond and eased the nervous apprehension of the Virginian patriots. At the same time, the military victories in Virginia's neighboring states won by the new Continental Army Commander in the South, General Greene, helped to turn the tide of the war in favor of the Americans. Nevertheless, Governor Jefferson was forced to endure another humiliating incident which his enemies would harp upon for a long time to come.

In May 1781, the British Army, which had been forced to retreat from Georgia, North and South Carolina by General Greene, regrouped in Virginia. State officials left Richmond and fled deep west to Charlottesville. Jefferson, by this time finding it ab-

solutely impossible to carry the heavy burden of the governorship, was preparing to step down from office. He spent the final days before the transfer of power at Monticello. According to Jefferson's foes, on the morning of June 4 the governor was quietly preparing for breakfast while at the same time periodically looking at the grounds through his home telescope. It was while peering through the telescope that he saw a unit of British dragoons that had been sent for the expressed purpose of seizing the Virginian Governor. As the story went, Jefferson fled Monticello without even taking time to change clothes.

In actual fact the governor had been informed of the approaching British in good time by an officer of the militia. He calmly gathered his family and sent them to safety, and only then left Monticello himself. But the fact remained that Jefferson had been forced to flee the British a second time.

Jefferson had hardly stepped down from office when his political opponents demanded an investigation into his activity. The former governor was convinced that the chief organizer of the investigation was Patrick Henry. A number of snide questions were asked: Why had Richmond not been properly defended? Why was there no resistance organized against Arnold? Why was the militia called out so late? In the end Jefferson acquitted himself on all counts, and his friends even insisted on a resolution that expressed gratitude to the former governor for his services as the chief executive of the "Republic of Virginia." But the resolution stirred up such humiliating controversy for Jefferson that it was only approved after the Virginia Assembly had thanked Washington, Lafayette and Jean Baptiste Rochambeau for their military feats.

The depreciating comments made by his enemies strengthened Jefferson's resolve to retire from politics, an idea he had been giving serious thought even as governor. He turned down a flattering offer made by the Continental Congress to conduct peace negotiations with Britain and even more adamantly re-

fused his friends' pleas to run again for the state assembly. The crushing defeat inflicted on the British by the Americans near Yorktown in October 1781 freed Jefferson, in his own mind, from his moral responsibility to the "Republic of Virginia" during the difficult days of the war.

The year 1782 Jefferson spent in seclusion at Monticello. He indulged in intellectual pursuits and compiled the results of the revolution in a large book modestly entitled *Notes on Virginia*. Jefferson's family was of great concern to him at this time. His close friends were aware of his misfortune: Jefferson's wife was seriously ill.

Martha had taken sick in the spring of 1782 as a result of an unusually difficult pregnancy. The child's birth—a daughter was born on May 8—did not relieve her suffering. That spring, Jefferson, as was his custom, noted in his diary the blossoming of various flowers. His last entry was made on June 25, afterwards he did not write again.

Martha remained seriously ill all summer and died on September 8. One of Jefferson's servants later described Martha's last days. According to the woman, Mrs. Jefferson summoned her family to her bedside the day she died. Mr. Jefferson sat beside his dying wife while she told him her last wishes. When she began to speak of her children, she cried so that for some time she could not speak at all. Finally, she raised her hand and, extending four fingers, told her husband that she could not die in peace unless she were certain that her children would never have a step-mother. Jefferson took her hand in his and solemnly swore he would never marry again.

A year after the death of his wife Jefferson returned to political life, breaking his vow never to become involved with politics again. Apparently, intellectual pursuits alone, which had brought him such success, could not satisfy him completely. It was not very surprising that Jefferson should choose to return to politics; at the time this was the only sphere in which one could achieve renown in America.

During the fall of 1783 and the first half of 1784,



Minister to France

Jefferson served as a delegate to the Continental Congress. On July 5, 1784, he left for Paris to fulfill the duties of US Minister to France. His five-year stay in France was an invaluable political and intellectual experience that enormously influenced his future governmental functions.

Jefferson was a Francophile before he arrived in Paris. He was especially intrigued by the ideology of the Enlightenment. Before he even presented his credentials to Louis XVI, he was pleased to learn that the publication of the *Encyclopédie*, which would subsequently come to be known as the Bible of the French Revolution, was continued. The immortal spirit of Copernicus and Galileo, Rousseau and Voltaire made its presence felt in the contents of the *Encyclopédie*. However, Jefferson was not fortunate enough to meet the giants of the Enlightenment: Rousseau and Voltaire had died in 1778, and Jean D'Alembert, publisher of the *Encyclopédie*, in 1783. But he was introduced to the beacons of European science—Lavoisier and Condorcet. Meeting Comte de Buffon, an eminent French zoologist,

Jefferson showed him stuffed skins of American animals that he had never seen before. The distinguished scholars of France quickly recognized Jefferson as Franklin's worthy successor—not only as ambassador but as a daring and erudite thinker of the New World.

After his first contacts with members of the French court Jefferson became convinced that Enlightenment and monarchy were incompatible. As the American Minister his first obligation was to meet with important French aristocrats, not, as he would have much preferred, with progressive thinkers. But almost as quickly as he began to fulfill his duty, Jefferson grew weary of it. The French court immediately made it clear to him that his services to the American Revolution were of no importance to the French aristocrats, who thought him a commoner and representative of a republican government that was both contrary to nature and detestable. The fat and stupid King Louis XVI looked somewhere above Jefferson's head when the American ambassador informed the French monarch of his mission to France. On the other hand, despite their frozen faces, a hundred chosen Swiss guards surrounding the King watched Jefferson's every move. The American ambassador was vexed at the absurdity of court etiquette. For example, everyone, including the envoy and the King himself, had to remove his hat at the mention of the names of the King or Queen.

The outer splendor and refined manners of the French court did not conceal its depravity. In his letters home, Jefferson wrote increasingly not only about the licentiousness of the court but of Paris in general. Coming from a puritanical heritage, he saw Paris as a city wallowing in debauchery. Jefferson bemoaned the fact that not only the young people of France but their elders as well were involved in love affairs and escapades; family happiness seemed not to exist anywhere in the country; no one knew the meaning of real, sincere love. Marital fidelity and decency, it appeared, had been totally forgotten, and the presence of thousands of seductive prostitutes

wandering the streets of Paris revealed that the debauchery was not confined to high society.

But the lack of morals was by no means the only negative aspect of life in French society. What was much worse was the mass poverty. Walking around the city, Jefferson often thought that social relations in France, where property was concentrated in the hands of a small number of aristocrats, were extremely warped. And in studying the contrasts of the country, he became an even stronger supporter of the egalitarianism that had appeared in his native land.

While in France Jefferson was fortunate to witness the greatest revolution of the 18th century. For decades the revolutionary trend in France, inspired by such enlightened thinkers as Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu, had gradually been developing. French reactionaries even suggested that it was the inimical influence of the Enlightenment that encouraged the revolution. The American War of Independence, which preceded the French Revolution, provided the testing ground for many ideas and doctrines which were later adopted by the French revolutionary camp. As one of the recognized representatives of the American Enlightenment and the author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson could not but approve the antifeudal uprising in France. However, what was alarming to Jefferson was the fact that from the very beginning the French Revolution was far greater in scope and intensity than the American Revolution or, of course, the Shays Rebellion, which Jefferson considered the optimal way to right political wrongs.

During the first months of the revolution, Jefferson, it seems, feared most of all an outbreak of open fighting by the opposing forces, which would inevitably result in bloodshed. And when blood did flow during the historic storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, Jefferson, forgetting his allegorical comparison of freedom to a tree that must from time to time be nourished with the blood of patriots and tyrants, condemned the madness of the mob.

It was not until August 1789, just before he left France to return to the United States in answer to a US Government summons, that Jefferson realized it would be impossible to achieve any compromise between the monarchy and revolutionaries. In one of his last letters home he formulated a remarkable political concept: each generation has the right to conclude its own social contract and adopt a new constitution; the dead have no rights over the living.

On November 23, 1789, after a five-year absence, Jefferson returned to his Virginia estate. He hoped to rest a short time at his beloved Monticello, and then continue to fulfill the duties of the American Minister to Paris. He was certain that the French Revolution would be successful, and he wanted to witness its victory. But President Washington offered him the post of Secretary of State in the US Government.

Jefferson expressed his doubts about accepting the post and related his desire to return to Paris. But Washington was insistent and, thanks to pressure from several influential American politicians, Jefferson was persuaded to serve in the American capital instead of Paris.

James Madison, Jefferson's longtime friend and a leading figure in the House of Representatives, was the one who did the most to persuade Jefferson to accept Washington's offer. While visiting Jefferson at Monticello, Madison discussed with him the serious changes that had taken place in American politics during his absence. Madison was especially concerned about trends in government policy that clearly threatened both Virginia and all the southern agrarian states, and pleaded with Jefferson to make use of the authority and influence that he would have as Secretary of State to halt these trends.

One of the most fundamental ideological conflicts in US government policy, later described by historians as the dispute between Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian policies, was to arise as a result of Jefferson's acceptance of the office of Secretary of State.

Jefferson disliked all aspects of Hamilton's political views. He categorically disagreed with Hamilton's

opinion of class relations in the US and, consequently, of the state's class policy. Jefferson and other progressive American thinkers were of the opinion that after the establishment of a republican order, social homogeneity and harmony would ensue. Hamilton and other Federalists, however, forecast rapid social stratification of American society and aggravation of class hostilities, which would necessitate significantly stronger government in order to protect social order and property. The democrats did not believe that the nation would become embroiled in sharp clashes between the rich and the poor, nor in the inevitability of a powerful bureaucratic government and repressive organs to curtail the rights and freedoms of the people. Rather, they envisioned the education of the masses, with the people becoming a reliable safeguard for the gains of the revolution.

It is significant that American democrats were sensitive to the aggravation of socio-political conflicts in the country and endeavored to prevent their spread. With Jefferson the sole exception, all condemned the Shays Rebellion which they viewed as an anomaly of the bourgeois-democratic system, a chance occurrence in the establishment of the "empire of reason." Though justifying the Shays Rebellion, Jefferson, like all the democrats, disagreed with the moderates that this "little rebellion," as he called it, reflected the split of American society into hostile factions. All democrats disagreed with the moderates, who held that the rebellion revealed the inability of a democratic state to provide for social order. Expressing a typically democratic point of view, Benjamin Rush pointed out that the republican experiment in the US was at the incipient stage, that its advantages over monarchic, oligarchic and aristocratic systems would be further revealed as the masses were more educated, and that insignificant conflicts like the Shays uprising did not provide grounds for comparing republicanism with anarchy.³⁶

In an essay written immediately following the revolution, another thinker of the Enlightenment,



Benjamin Franklin, stated that there was no place to be found in the US for the poor or the very wealthy minority, whose interests were so heatedly defended by moderate-conservative authors of the 1787 Federal Constitution. Franklin, an early spokesman for the theory of labor value, maintained that no one in the US lived on unearned income, which, in his opinion, included incomes earned from nonproductive labor. He was happy that there were no lucratively paid political offices in the US which were capable of diverting citizens from productive activities. In Franklin's homogeneous America there were no grounds for the origin of the class hostilities which John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and other moderates so vividly described, nor, consequently, were there grounds for the appearance of antagonistic socio-political factions and parties. True, Franklin could not deny that there were parties and disagreements in some states, but he viewed the appearance of political groups and factions (which he called parties) during the time of the revolution as trends of thought that differed only in their means of achieving the single goal of social prosperity and reflected the diversity of opinion in-

herent in any society which possessed the great joy of political freedom.

Jefferson had similar views concerning the nature of political divisions in the USA. During the years of the revolution he, like Franklin, believed that contradictions between the rich and the poor and vast property differences typified European societies, not the USA. Jefferson explained the political conflicts in his country by psychological factors: the different temperaments, physical and moral traits of people. He hoped that there would be no division into parties in the nation, commenting that if he should have to ascend to heaven with a party, he would just as well decline the honor.

Social stratification and the disputes between classes and factions sharply increased after the revolution and gradually dispelled the illusions of the progressive thinkers, making partisan attitudes *a sine qua non* for them. Jefferson came face to face with the problem of political allegiance right after he assumed the post of Secretary of State. He could accept none of the programs then proposed by the administration: neither the pro-British foreign policy, nor economic programs designed to strengthen the position of the financial, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie in the Northeast, nor the political doctrine which aggrandized the role of the elite to the detriment of representative bodies. Jefferson envisaged a different path of development for the country.

Both in the revolutionary and postrevolutionary period, Jefferson saw America as an agrarian country inhabited for the most part by small independent farmers. And he was not alone in his hopes; they were shared by the majority of American democrats, with Benjamin Franklin joining Jefferson in zealously defending the agrarian path of development.

Their advocacy of the country's agrarian development reached its apex after the revolution. To a certain degree this viewpoint was theoretically based on physiocratic doctrine. But the most important for the progressive thinkers was their own comparative analysis of the characteristic socio-economic

development of the USA, which remained a predominantly agrarian country, and Western Europe, especially Great Britain and France, where manufactories were much more numerous. In England, the transfer to industrial capitalism was well under way at the time. Comparing the relatively underdeveloped social contrasts and conflicts in the USA with the much greater polarization between wealth and poverty in Western Europe, they held that these differences stemmed from the two distinct paths of economic development followed in the New and the Old Worlds. But it was the social aspect and effects of economic phenomena that concerned them most. Jefferson and Franklin's evaluation of agrarian and commercial-industrial paths of development was characterized, among other things, by a distinct ethical quality: the men viewed them as the paths of good and evil.

Jefferson maintained that the agrarian path of development eliminated the possibility of mass poverty and pauperization; unlike industrial countries, an agrarian nation was protected from the appearance and development of political corruption, which had taken on disastrous proportions in commercial-industrial England. He also believed that only a republic of farmers could strengthen moral values and avoid dissipation. He was willing to recognize civil virtues only in the class of independent farmers: "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds."³⁷

Both Jefferson and Franklin considered the agrarian path not only morally and politically correct but also pointed out that in the USA it had an ineradicable economic basis. The appropriation of western lands by the federal government in the 1780s raised democratic hopes of providing for many generations of American farmers. Jefferson considered it axiomatic that until the agrarian sector of the economy became overpopulated, the country would hap-

pily be able to avoid the alternative of pernicious commercial-industrial development. He was extremely optimistic about the prospects for agrarian development: "We have now lands enough to employ an infinite number of people in their cultivation."³⁸

From a modern standpoint, Jefferson's views, again, seem utopian while those of Hamilton appear more economically sagacious. However, this evaluation has been made considering the fact, first of all, that the USA developed along the lines of industrial capitalism, which Hamilton favored, while Jefferson's dreams of an agrarian, farmers' America fell through. It should be recalled, though, that this became evident only several decades after the birth of the United States. During Hamilton and Jefferson's lifetime, it seemed more realistic that the nation should develop along a path of agrarian rather than industrial capitalism. At that time it was still mainly an agricultural country, and its huge tracts of unsettled land appeared to guarantee in the eyes of many enlightened men that the future of America lay in farms and agricultural communities, not manufactories and cities.

Like Franklin, Jefferson considered it unrealistic and, moreover, dangerous in many respects to try to turn American citizens into mariners and artisans. Of course, even then there were mariners, traders and industrialists in the USA and Jefferson had no intention of trying to interest them in agriculture. Moreover, he proposed that the government concern itself with the welfare of the representatives of these professions, urging, for example, the upholding of equal maritime rights with other countries. The maritime profession did not evoke his displeasure as did the class of people engaged in industry, which Jefferson considered the transmitter of vices and the means by which the government authority could be destroyed. Still, he was not enthused about the development of maritime trade in the United States, for it brought the danger of competition and military confrontations with strong European powers. In a letter to G.K. van Hogendorf written in October 1785, Jeffer-

son expressed the desire that the nation should not become involved with navigation at all, that it should not trade on the foreign market but develop its relations with Europe along the same principles as those of China. Jefferson also wrote that as long as the USA could engage its population in agricultural labor, it should prefer to import industrial goods from Europe instead of manufacturing them itself. The way he put it, "We should long keep our workmen in Europe, while Europe should be drawing rough materials and even subsistence from America."³⁹

Jefferson and Franklin did not share the opinion of Robert Morris and Alexander Hamilton, who considered it necessary to safeguard national industry with protectionist policies. Jefferson pointed out that US trade relations with other countries should be built on the basis of complete freedom. Only Britain, as punishment for the harm it had caused America, should be deprived access to US markets. Franklin saw no sense in protectionism inasmuch as such a policy pursued the absurd goal of defending industry which was not viable and would only arouse the anger of the farmers, the sole reliable support of the republican government. Moreover, Franklin observed, protective tariffs would not make artisans happier or richer; they would merely use the extra money to drink more and work less.

Jefferson, Franklin and other democrats believed that the agrarian path was that of farmer economy development. But considering the reality of the time and prospects for the future, this hope was obviously misplaced. It was by no means the farmers who controlled US agriculture but slaveowning planters, and in the future their position would not weaken, as the democrats hoped, but grow even stronger. The Jeffersonian agrarian path could lead but to a contradictory (and ultimately doomed to failure) alliance between plantation owners and farmers in which the leading role would necessarily fall to the planters. The Republican Party, too, which Jefferson formed in the early 1790s in response to Hamilton's faction and which was to lead America down the farmer economy

path of development, was eventually to be guided by the plantation owners. Was Jefferson himself aware of the contradictory nature of the doctrine he supported? We have no direct answer to the question, but judging from the enthusiasm with which he began to organize the party from the moment he became Secretary of State, we may assume that he believed in the triumph of his goals.

The first step taken by the Republican Party was the founding, in 1791, of a newspaper. This was very logical and timely inasmuch as Hamilton had begun to publish a paper reflecting the views of his faction as early as 1789.

To publish the paper, Jefferson called upon Philip Freneau, that eloquent bard of the American Revolution who was then languishing in poverty. At the same time Freneau was offered a position as a translator in the State Department. The paper began publication in Philadelphia, where the capital of the USA had been temporarily established (later to be moved to Washington, which, as had been agreed upon, was to be built in the mouth of the Potomac).

The very first issues of Jefferson's paper seemed rather strange and unexpected as regards its form of opposition to Hamilton's line. To begin with, the name of the paper, *National Gazette*, not only did not contradict but even supported the idea behind Hamilton's *Gazette of the United States*. By the very names of their press organs, both parties affirmed fidelity to the federal organization of the USA and the Constitution of 1787, i. e. the principles of the socio-political order established at the concluding stages of the revolution. The first issues of Jefferson's paper also clearly confirmed his party's allegiance to the fundamental institutions of the United States, so that in this respect, there was no difference left between it and the Federalists' paper. Even the similar sounding surnames of the two papers' editors: John Fenno (*Gazette of the United States*) and Philip Freneau (*National Gazette*) symbolized, as it were, a certain similarity. Jefferson made it unambiguously clear that he intended to oppose Hamilton within

the framework of the existing system. The form of opposition chosen by Jefferson and his party laid the cornerstone of the two-party system in the USA—the nation's bourgeois principles would be supported and strengthened by consensus.

There was another reason behind Jefferson's concerted efforts to declare his loyalty to the federal union and the Constitution: Hamilton and his paper continued to allege ties between the Jeffersonians and Antifederalists, who in 1787-1788 opposed the draft federal constitution and called for preserving the Articles of Confederation. And since such ties did exist and Jefferson was indeed critical of the undemocratic aspects of the federal union and the Constitution, he found it necessary to express his sincerity and underscore his faith in the fundamental principles of the system of government and law in the USA.

Of course, there were serious differences between Jefferson's and Hamilton's parties and papers. We shall outline the basic ones. The Federalists wanted to contain the bourgeois-democratic changes wrought by the revolution, while the Jeffersonians urged their further development. The Jeffersonians, and in this case they proved more perspicacious than the Hamiltonians, believed that the democratic goals of the American Revolution had by no means all been achieved and that bourgeois-democratic rights and liberties should be extended and spread to include other population groups. It was this political precept that would eventually secure their victory, but first they were to suffer a series of harsh defeats.

The Jeffersonians purposefully chose to be known as the Democratic Party. They also called themselves Republicans (both names have been used in describing them). It was under the banner of democracy and republicanism that they launched their first attacks against Hamilton and the Federalists.

At first the Jeffersonians tried to vanquish the Hamiltonians with the same weapons their opponents hoped to use to defeat them—the Secretary



The first US Government: Jefferson, Hamilton, and Washington

of the Treasury and his associates were branded enemies of the American Republic. The Hamiltonians called the Jeffersonians Antifederalists and anarchists while the Jeffersonians described their opponents as monarchists.

One after the other, accusations appeared in Jefferson's paper alleging that the Secretary of the Treasury harbored monarchist sympathies and hoped

to restructure government in the US along British lines. Hamilton was said to have written a reactionary pamphlet entitled *Plain Truth* that was Published by British agents in 1776 for the purpose of discrediting the idea of American independence. The paper also asserted that Hamilton had more than once offered George Washington a scepter and crown, and that he wished to introduce the traditions and customs of British Parliament into the US Government.

This was all obvious propaganda. In fact, just before the outbreak of the War of Independence, Hamilton stood on the left wing of the patriotic movement, and during the early years of the revolution promoted ideas similar to the demands of Jefferson and Paine. His shift to the right occurred later, but even then he was never a monarchist.

The Jeffersonian Republicans went further than political accusations against Hamilton, trying to discredit him personally by investigating his financial matters and even stooping to dig through their adversary's "dirty laundry." And Hamilton and his supporters repaid in kind, accusing the Republicans of being Jacobin spies spreading the worst kind of "French disease" — disbelief in God and anarchy. How distant this political reality seemed to be from the "kingdom of reason" Jefferson the enlightener had longed for.

In his efforts to expand the base of the Republican-Democratic Party (the name most commonly given to the Jeffersonians by historians and serving to distinguish them from present-day Republicans and Democrats in the US) Jefferson was increasingly forced to accept compromises which inevitably required a departure from his initial philosophical principles.

The faction in the Republican-Democratic Party which came closest to expressing Jefferson's ideas was the Pennsylvanian Constitutionalists, who formed the democratic core of the Jeffersonian Republicans. This most radical and the only organized leftist political group during the War of Independence and formation of the United States, had appeared in Philadelphia during the revolution. The party, whose

leaders adopted an egalitarian position, maintained control over the state legislature for 12 years—from 1776 to 1788. In 1776 the Constitutionalists were successful in pushing forward the adoption of the most radical constitution of the revolutionary era and many other democratic measures.

It was only natural that the Pennsylvanian Constitutionalists should merge with the Republicans, becoming the party's left wing. In 1793, the events of the French Revolution and Jacobin reforms prompted the formation of Republican clubs in the US, the largest and most influential of which was the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania. This organization provided the Republican Democratic Party with many notable leaders, among them a future Secretary of the Treasury—Albert Gallatin. Unfortunately, the Pennsylvanian Constitutionalists would turn out to be the only group with Jacobin leanings in the Republican-Democratic Party.

New York and Virginia were also important centers of the Republican-Democratic Party. In 1791 Jefferson and Madison embarked on a "botanizing tour" of New York (the pretext for which was to study the state's flora and fauna), in the course of which they established close contacts with George Clinton and Aaron Burr, local leaders of the Antifederalists.

As one might expect, George Clinton, the "one-hundred percent anti-Hamiltonian," has traditionally been viewed by American historians as a "radical," "egalitarian" and, undisputedly, a democrat. Only Alfred Young, in his thorough research into the formation of the Republican Party in New York has revealed that its leader George Clinton, like the members of his circle, belonged to the American *nouveaux riches*, representatives of lower and middle-class white colonists who became wealthy enough in the difficult times of the revolution to defy the dominance of such families as the Schuylers and Livingstons.

Clinton and his followers acquired their wealth primarily thanks to successful dealings with government-appropriated lands in the West. Unlike the

Pennsylvanian Constitutionalists, the New York Antifederalists never included in their program demands to grant the poor greater access to free land. While constantly calling for breaking the power of New York moneylenders, Clinton simultaneously zealously defended private property.

In Virginia, the Republican-Democratic Party was largely composed of conservatives. Their recognized philosophical leader, Senator John Taylor, was a plantation owner who wrote books on agriculture and political economy that denounced the moneyed aristocracy of the Northeast and preached government "of the farmers, by the farmers and for the farmers." The ambitions of the plantation owners, which grew sharply in the 1790s as a result of the cotton boom, were thus conveniently masked.

The presence of slaveowning planters in the Jeffersonian Republican Party was a time-bomb. Did Jefferson realize the danger posed by including such conflicting social principles in his agrarian party? In answering this question it should be noted that his criticism of conservative planters was blunted by his desire to defeat the Hamiltonians. This is why he sacrificed the purity of his philosophical principles and the integrity of his concept concerning the agrarian-democratic development of the US, in which farmers had been singled out to play the leading role in American history. Moreover, Jefferson, like many opponents of slavery in the US, hoped for its peaceful and rather quick demise.

The economic indicators of the 1770s and 1780s led Jefferson to predict that plantation slavery would eventually die out. This was a time of protracted crisis for the planters, who were mainly using slaves to produce expensive tobacco. Jefferson assumed that this factor plus the ban on importing slaves that would go into effect in 1808 (as had been envisaged by the Federal Constitution) would put an end to the ignominious practice. However, he was unable to foresee the unexpected and unusually favorable turn of fortune for plantation slavery which occurred in 1793.

The sharp increase in the British demand for cotton as a result of an industrial revolution together with Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin served to give slavery in the US a second boost. Planters quickly began to adjust to the demands of the cotton boom, actively switching over to cotton production in hopes of improving their plantation economy. Industrialization and capitalism breathed new life into plantation slavery. Jefferson had foreseen many social misfortunes in association with industrial capitalism, but neither he nor any other American democrat was prepared for this.

The improved economy on slave plantations raised the political ambitions of the slaveowners. It was they and not the farmers that history would choose to lead Jefferson's agrarian coalition. But the dramatic confrontation that would eventually split the coalition was still years away, and Jefferson, unable to foresee it, continued to energetically organize what he was certain would be the party of America's democratic agrarian future.

Foreign policy gradually became the major source of contention between the Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians, reaching its peak in 1793 after the execution of the monarch in France and declaration of the French Republic. The French Revolution of 1793 set American democrats complicated problems. Some were frightened by the scope of the revolutionary force. Jefferson, to his credit, approached the events in France from a revolutionary-democratic position. He pointed out to the American people that the removal from power of the *feuillants* was unavoidable and justifiable: the revolution could not have developed further based on a constitutional monarchy and logically gave way to the formation of the republic. Jefferson did express regret at the "excesses" of revolutionary force (some innocent victims were sent to the scaffold along with counterrevolutionaries) but, again, he recalled his credo: the tree of liberty must from time to time be nourished with the blood of tyrants and patriots. He also observed that liberty had never before been won with so little

innocent blood, and that rather than have the French revolutionary cause fail, he would have seen half the earth desolated.

The Federalists were enraged at Jefferson's price for liberty and immediately labelled him a Jacobin. But Jefferson was proud of the name and did not offer any protest when his party was also termed Jacobin. The French Revolution had demonstrated a higher form of liberty to the American Republic, and Jefferson saw nothing wrong in admitting that.

A more complex issue was the attitude of Jefferson and his party to US obligations to France as an ally. Jefferson categorically refused to accept Hamilton's proposal that the French-American treaties signed in 1778 were null and void. On the contrary, Jefferson argued that these agreements had been reached between two nations and peoples, not governments, and therefore a change in the government of either country could not abrogate them. Jefferson also urged recognition of the French National Convention as a legal government and acceptance of the newly appointed ambassador who was to replace the former French envoy of the *feuillants*.

Jefferson was more cautious concerning US military obligations toward France. America had no navy or regular army capable of offering France any real assistance. Therefore, he proposed that his government refrain from participation in military actions. However, when Hamilton suggested that Washington declare US neutrality, Jefferson objected. First, he objected to the use of the term neutrality, which called into question the French-American treaties of 1778. Second, he believed that such a proclamation should be issued by Congress, not the President, and only after serious debate.

So great were the differences between Jefferson's foreign policy views and those imposed on Washington by the Secretary of the Treasury, that Jefferson was forced to resign in 1793. He did not conceal his pro-French sympathies from anyone, defending them orally, in his correspondence and the press. Unlike the leaders of the Federalist Party, he considered

France, not Britain, America's true "mother," for that country had entered into a military alliance with the North American Republic as early as 1778, and this, according to Jefferson, was decisive to its victory. The Secretary of State believed that the overthrow of the monarchy in France in 1793 had transformed the country's ties with the US into a unique, unprecedented alliance of progressive republics; the alliance of 1778 was truly the voice of fate.

Retreating to his family estate, Monticello, in 1794, Jefferson left the Republican-Democratic Party in the care of James Madison, who proved to be a capable leader. Under his individual guidance, the party was transformed within three years into a well-organized association with a wide social basis. It should be noted, however, that the development of events themselves served to strengthen the Republican Party position.

By 1794 it had become clear that the Federalists had gone too far in trying to curtail the bourgeois-democratic endeavors of the American Revolution. In 1793-1794 they loudly proclaimed the right of the President to dissolve the democratic clubs formed in support of republican changes in France. This was a clear violation of the Constitution and Bill of Rights which, adopted only a few years earlier, guaranteed Americans freedom of speech, the press and assembly. Hamilton's opponents rallied to form a broad democratic coalition after a farmers' demonstration protesting an unreasonable tax levied by the Federalists was cruelly suppressed in 1794 and the government signed a trade agreement with Britain, thus establishing close (suffocatingly close, in the opinion of the Republicans) contact between the USA and the foreign monarchy.

Only Jefferson could and should lead the democratic coalition, and numerous letters were sent to Monticello with this stated request. Jefferson heeded the call, and in the fall of 1796, still residing at Monticello, he gave permission to the party leadership to nominate him for President in the upcoming election. In December he was notified of the election results: Federalist candidate John Adams had defeat-

John Adams' inauguration



ed Jefferson by a vote of 71 of 68. In accordance with the practice of the times, Jefferson would serve as Vice-President. Aware of Adams's deep enmity for Hamilton and his opposition to the economic measures of the Secretary of the Treasury, Jefferson agreed to work together with the new President.

But John Adams was not the anti-Hamiltonian Jefferson expected. The new President openly attacked the gains of American Revolution. Whereas Hamilton was satisfied enough with the political system introduced by the 1787 Constitution, Adams and his circle (referred to in the history books as the Adams Federalists) wanted it reevaluated from a more conservative position. The Alien and Sedition Acts promulgated in 1798 marked the beginning of anti-democratic legislation in the US.

Making it a criminal offence to declare any kind of opposition to the government's domestic or foreign policy activities, these laws nullified the meaning of the first articles of the Bill of Rights, which proclaimed

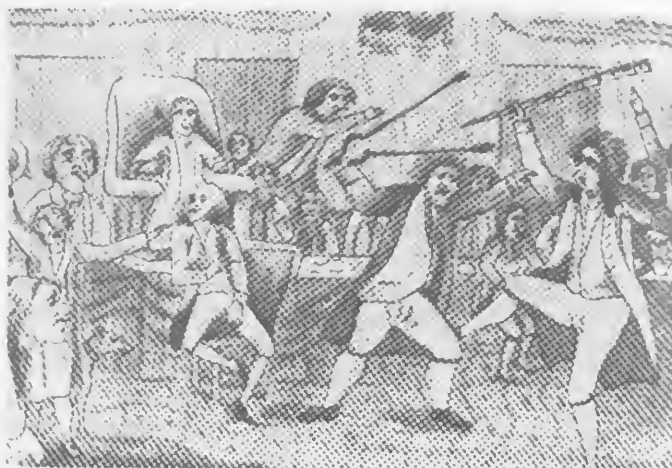
freedom of speech, the press and assembly. During the congressional discussion on the new acts, the majority of Federalists, without giving the Bill of Rights a second thought, harshly called for punishing any individual who either by printed or spoken word cast doubt on the fidelity of any legislator or member of the government to the "Constitution, liberties and people's happiness."

With Jesuit zeal, Robert G. Harper, leader of the southern Federalists, attempted to justify the reactionary laws. Harper was one of the first to demonstrate that the Constitution could be interpreted even in a reactionary spirit if that suited the interests of those in power. Yes, he agreed, the Constitution did guarantee liberty of speech and the press. But, Harper asked rhetorically, did this liberty of press include sedition and licentiousness? In this way he easily exposed the limits of liberty, and, of course, it was the Government that had the right to determine or qualify the printed or spoken word as sedition or licentiousness⁴⁰.

During Adams's presidency, the Federalists were openly critical not only of revolutionary ideas but moderate reforms. In their opinion, reforms were the cause of convulsions in the civilized world and shook the foundations of society.

Nonetheless, the Federalists did not ignore the possibility of somewhat modifying legal norms and principles in order to strengthen their position in the power system. The ideological principles of modification were conservative, and they were pushing the development of the American political system to the right. During the 12 years they remained in power, the Federalists sought to increase the political power and extend the prerogatives of the President.

John Adams became the most staunch defender of strong executive power. He was the first among the Federalists to announce that the Federal Constitution of 1787 had created a weak presidential office. Adams did not like the fact that the President should have to share the prerogative of concluding international agreements and nominating public officials



Republican vs Federalist Debates in Congress over the Alien and Sedition Acts. A cartoon

with the Senate and possess only limited, not full legislative veto powers.⁴¹ Political reality and the characteristic features of government based on rival political parties led the Federalist Party to support and further develop Adams's initial abstract thoughts about increased presidential power. With Congress facing a strong Federalist President, it would automatically be easier for the Federalist Party to steer its own domestic and foreign-policy course, for the Federalists could never be certain of unchallenged domination in the legislative chambers. During their years in power, the Federalists intensively worked to increase the power of the executive office, devising arguments that would give the President more freedom of action.

John Adams and his circle pushed the conservative trend of the Federalist government to the limit. And this is what determined their defeat in the confrontation with the Jeffersonian Republicans in 1800 and led to a new chapter in American history.



Philip Freneau

The Presidential Office

In 1800, political power in the US was transferred for the first time from one party (Federalists) to another (Jeffersonian Republicans). At the time this event was regarded as a radical political coup. The victorious party, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, considered the "revolution of 1800" as important as that of 1776 (in a letter written in 1819 to judge Spencer Roane, Jefferson even stated that "the revolution of 1800 ... was as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1766 was in its form." The country lived in expectation of the radical changes promised both by Republican ideology as a whole and the concrete proposals put forward by the Party's preelection platform.

Many circumstances contributed to the Jeffersonian party's victory in 1800: the sharp factional rift in the Federalist Party (Alexander Hamilton, its philosophical leader, had unleashed a large-scale and vicious campaign against John Adams, the party's presidential candidate), the enormous respect among the American people enjoyed by Republican leaders Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and certainly

the fact that the Republicans had been able to create a much more effective and unified party organization than their rival in the preceding decade. But the major reason the Republicans were victorious was due to the fact that they had been able to formulate and offer the nation an alternative to the dubious economic and political policies of the Federalists.

Throughout their term in power the Federalists had boasted that their party represented "order" and supported holding back the bourgeois transformations of the revolutionary period, restraining, not encouraging, dramatic social innovations. The political doctrine of the Federalists was especially odious: unlike the Jeffersonian Republicans, their leaders could not recognize the significance of bourgeois political democracy as a means of governing the American political system. The Federalists opposed bourgeois democracy under circumstances when the times and needs of American capitalist society demanded it and its development was on the rise. The Federalists' foreign-policy strategy, in which pro-British sympathies were cloaked under a banner of neutrality, seriously clashed with the goal to establish the national sovereignty of the USA. It was only the party's economic policy that provided conditions for capitalist progress. But its open ties with the financial and commercial-manufacture bourgeoisie of the Northeast alarmed large segments of the American public. The most serious shortcoming in the Federalists' economic program lay in that they virtually ignored the specific needs of the US agrarian population, which at the beginning of the 19th century, just as at the end of the 18th, comprised more than 90 per cent of the country's inhabitants.

Republican propaganda in 1800 was most effective in succinctly pointing out to the masses the unpopular results of the Federalists' stay in power: British influence, a standing army, direct taxation, state debt, an expensive navy, exceedingly high salaries for congressmen, aristocratic leanings. Jefferson and his circle countered these with more democratic prospects for the development of the country

which, they hoped, would end the Federalists' 12-year hold on power.

First of all, the Jeffersonians promised to revive the Bill of Rights which, though approved in 1791, had in effect been shelved by the Federalists. Charles Pinckney, a prominent Republican leader, emotionally declared in 1800 that the party would make it a goal to forever revoke such laws as the Alien and Sedition Acts. In his Inauguration Address in March 1801, Jefferson urged that trust in sovereignty of the people and republican form of government, which had been seriously undermined in the 1790s, be restored. Still, not in this speech or any other public address during his term as President did Jefferson dare approach the topic of the development of direct government by the people in the USA, though the idea had occupied an important place in both his personal views and the ideology of the Republican Party prior to the election. Nonetheless, the policies of the new President and the victorious party were in sharp contrast to the blatant elitist goals of the Federalists.

Of those economic proposals included in the Republicans' election campaign platform and supported by the party throughout Jefferson's term in office, the most important for the average American was the proposal to radically alter the financial system by transferring the burden of taxes from the working man to the wealthy. In his first message to Congress, Jefferson proposed lifting all direct taxes, which had rapidly increased under the Federalist government. The new President especially stressed the social import of tax reform: as a result the working man would be freed of the burden of taxes, since the weight of the remaining "foreign taxes" or import duties would fall on the wealthy citizens who were the sole consumers of foreign goods.

The party proposed yet other radical measures. Its leaders called for disbanding the army, halting the construction of a naval fleet, eliminating the national debt, closing the Bank of the United States, reforming the courts and simplifying the bureaucracy. These

proposals stirred up a real panic among Federalists, many of whom, like Fisher Ames, forecast that the country would quickly sink to a state of "nature and primitive virtue."⁴² Some Federalists, however, did not lose heart. Strange as it may seem, these included Alexander Hamilton, the founder of the federalist system.

Compared with other Federalists, Hamilton was much more observant and perspicacious in evaluating Jefferson's political behavior. A careful observer of the Republicans' election campaign would have noticed two aspects which definitely contradicted each other. Such contradictory elements in the Jeffersonians' strategy became more and more evident during their term in power when it was time to put their ideological goals into political practice. One trend, which frightened the Federalists but was well received by the masses, was initiating bold democratic transformations in all spheres of public life. Another, much less evident, consisted of promises to retain political continuity with the previous administrations.

During the presidential election campaign the Republicans underscored the fact that they supported the 1787 Constitution and the concept of a strong union of states no less than the Federalists. In a number of states Jeffersonians even preferred to call themselves "Republican Federalists," denied any connection with the Antifederalist movement of 1787-1788 and indignantly renounced their rival party's assertions to be the only custodian of the federal constitutional system. In his Inaugural Address Jefferson himself considered it necessary to stress the united position of parties with respect to the union of states and offered the loyal opposition an olive branch of conciliation: "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."

During the presidencies of Jefferson and his "heir," James Madison (four of the first five American presidents came from Virginia's plantation-owner elite, so that contemporaries and historians have referred to them as the "Virginian dynasty"), consistency in



President of the
United States.
A portrait by
Rembrandt Peale, 1805

the two parties' policies was spread to increasingly more areas of state activities. In certain instances the Jeffersonians were forced against their will to concede to Federalist doctrine due to the objective developmental demands of American capitalism which were not necessarily in keeping with their worldview. For example, already at the beginning of his presidency Jefferson was compelled to renounce one of the fundamental official doctrines of the Republican Party—the nation's agrarian path of development. In his first annual message to Congress, Jefferson announced agriculture, manufacture, commerce and shipping to be the four pillars of American prosperity. Gradually he was even forced to concede the principle of government nonintervention in private capitalist development, which had always been one of the main ideas supported by the Republicans and which he himself had avidly advocated in his first messages to Congress. From 1805-1806 Jefferson began to argue that federal treasury funds should be used to develop navigation, canals, road construction,

and even to encourage manufactories. Soon he also came to forget the idea of free trade, acknowledging that the state was obliged to defend national industry from foreign competition with the help of a protectionist policy.

Jefferson's willingness to compromise undermined the integrity and unity of the Republican Party, and this was revealed by the surfacing of a wide range of political views which threatened to split the party into separate factions. The most numerous group was composed of the so-called old Republicans who still strongly supported enacting the principles the party had adopted in the 1790s. But the old Republicans were in turn subdivided into different groups. The right-wing element consisted of orthodox Republicans like John Taylor and Edmund Pendleton who adamantly demanded that the government not give an inch to commercial-industrial circles (the development of commerce and manufactories was alleged to fatally threaten the nation with moral and social depravity) and work toward transforming the USA into a purely agrarian country. Their doctrine was intended to strengthen the dominant position of southern planters in the government. The orthodox Republicans were appalled at Jefferson's attempts to achieve inter-party consensus in his political undertakings and quickly demonstrated their opposition to the administration.

The left wing of the old Republicans was occupied by statesmen to whom Jefferson's presidency signified the beginning of a decisive struggle to democratize all spheres of social life. Philadelphia became their rallying point, and George Logan, a strident pamphleteer who espoused egalitarian social ideals until his death, became, unquestionably, the radical Republicans' most colorful figure. Logan, like a number of other Pennsylvanian democrats, condemned Jefferson's attempts to introduce innovations while seeking to preserve some form of continuity with Federalist policy.

Having alienated the old Republicans, Jefferson tried to win the support of the party's moderate

George Logan



wing, which favored a policy of pragmatism. He entrusted a key post in his government, that of Secretary of State, to James Madison, who already in the War of Independence had exhibited a remarkable ability to break deadlocks between the northeastern and southern delegates to the Continental Congress, winning fame as the great conciliator. Jefferson and Madison were longtime friends, but their political alliance was strange in many respects. The two Virginians had always held considerably different philosophical views. An American historian has aptly described the most important difference as Jefferson's opinion that the danger of tyranny was located in centralized power while Madison, on the contrary, considered the danger to be found in the undisciplined and overbearing impulses of local majorities.⁴³ But Jefferson and Madison's opposition (albeit for different reasons) to Hamilton's plan for development of the USA and their political pragmatism helped the two statesmen overcome this and other differences.

A second key position in Jefferson's government, Secretary of the Treasury, was offered to Albert Gallatin of Pennsylvania, who symbolized the link between the northeastern and southern circles in the Republican Party. However, offering the post (which



in the 1790s had been occupied by Hamilton himself) to the Pennsylvanian did not necessarily reflect a forced concession of Virginian party leaders to the northeastern Republicans. In the late 1790s Gallatin had made a name for himself as the most forceful critic of the Federalists' financial policy. With facts and figures at his fingertips, he was able to reveal the malfeasance of Hamilton and other Federalists.

It was Gallatin who was faced with implementing the Jeffersonian Republicans' major campaign promise—eradicating Hamilton's financial policies, the cornerstone of the Federalist system throughout the 1790s. He was most successful on points: decreasing the national debt and eliminating all direct taxes.

The US national debt, which Hamilton considered a reliable basis for uniting the states and establishing close ties between the government and the financial bourgeoisie, was looked upon by the Jeffersonians as a means to further enrich northeastern financial barons and rob the common taxpayer. By 1801 the debt had reached 83 million dollars. Gallatin had to eliminate it in 10 or so years by making annual payments of 7 million dollars. However, a number of

circumstances (the Louisiana Purchase, which increased the national debt by 15 million dollars, the unexpected need to increase military expenditures due to worsening relations with the British, and other events) prevented the implementation of this plan. Nonetheless, the Jeffersonians managed to significantly reduce the debt to 57 million dollars in 1809 and 45 million dollars in 1812 just before the war with England (the debt understandably shot upwards at the start of the war).

The Jefferson government scored a real social victory in abolishing all direct taxes, which had always been a source of heated contention between the Federalist and Republican parties (when the Federalists imposed a tax on house, land and slaves in 1798, one Republican leader, John Taylor, even proposed the dissolution of the union and formation of a southern confederacy).⁴⁴ Among the taxes abolished was the excise tax, which, in the mid-1790s, had prompted the famous "Whiskey Rebellion" and had always been the most odious tax in the eyes of the farmers. When the last direct tax—on salt—had been lifted, Jefferson, justifiably proud of the reform, could address Congress with the following rhetorical question: "What farmer, what mechanic, what laborer ever sees a taxgatherer of the United States?"

The Jeffersonian Republicans followed an ambiguous policy with respect to the Bank of the United States, a principal element in Hamilton's financial system. The Republican Party had traditionally viewed the Bank and the financial bourgeoisie of the Northeast which supported it as a major source for spreading aristocratic infection in the USA.⁴⁵ In their campaign against the Bank, the Jeffersonians were able to enlist the support of not only agrarian advocates but also many representatives of the commercial-industrial bourgeoisie who were angered by the Bank's credit monopoly (it was largely due to this group's switching party allegiance in the 1790s that Jefferson won the presidential election in 1800). Once in power, the Republicans began to encourage in every way possible the development of banks in

the states, the number of which increased fourfold during Jefferson's term in office. But the party was divided when it came to attacking the Bank of the United States head-on.

The Bank Charter expired in 1811 when Jefferson's successor, James Madison, was in office. But the Republican administration's economic policy continued to be in the hands of Gallatin, who remained in his post as Secretary of the Treasury. It was Gallatin who opposed liquidating the Bank by explaining that preserving the institution was the only way to provide the government with the credit it needed for its increasing military expenditures. The old Republicans, however, were categorically opposed to the Bank. In the end, the sharp rift among the Republicans in the Senate resulted in a tie vote: 17 legislators voting for liquidation and 17 voting to renew the Bank Charter. The fate of the Bank was now in the hands of Vice-President George Clinton, who cast his vote with the old Republicans. Ironically, however, a few years later the Republicans themselves initiated the establishment of a new national bank: the great financial difficulties experienced by the federal government during the War of 1812 compelled the Republicans to try to reestablish the "aristocratic" institution they had once so strongly denounced. A second bank was chartered in 1816.

The antithesis of the Federalist system, according to Jefferson and other Republicans, was an agrarian society based on small independent farmers. The President's program of positive economic change included the idea, he had proposed already during the first year of the American Revolution, of freely allocating 50 acres of land to citizens with little or no property. Jefferson did not risk making this proposal during his term in office, but he did take steps to make it easier for the common man to acquire property from the government's fund of uninhabited lands. On March 26, 1804, Congress issued a resolution which decreased the minimum price of land set by the act of 1800 from \$2.00 to \$1.64 an acre, and the minimum acreage sold from 320 to 160. Thus,

one more step was made in paving the way for a farmers' path of capitalist development in American agriculture.

The most controversial issue of the Republicans' domestic policy was slavery. The administration's approach to the question clearly revealed the contradictions and limitations of Jeffersonian democracy, which called for extending bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms to wide segments of the white population but proposed no effective measures to abolish slavery.

Unlike during the years of the revolution, while serving as President, just as in the 1790s, Jefferson refrained from publicly criticizing slavery, confiding his thoughts to his friends and correspondents.⁴⁶ He had apparently placed his hopes exclusively on the gradual abolition of slavery. As early as the years of the War of Independence and in the 1800s he held the patently conservative idea of repatriating free blacks from the USA. When a conspiracy of slaves was uncovered in Virginia in 1800, Jefferson suggested to Governor James Monroe that instead of punishing the slaves he send them to Sierra Leone, thus making it possible for the black population of the USA to return to Africa. However the leaders of the free black colony of Sierra Leone, which had been established with the aid of a British philanthropist society, refused to accept the American blacks. So Jefferson turned his eyes to nearby Santo Domingo where, at the end of the 18th century, the legendary Toussaint-Louverture had led a successful black slave uprising against the French which resulted in the abolition of slavery. But the President's plan was not backed by other Republicans, who had their fill of the neighboring black republic. In 1804 the US broke off relations with the world's first free black state.

The discovery of the Gabriel Plot stirred panic among southern plantation owners, who strictly forbade any discussion of abolition in the planter states. The South's hardening racist policy, in turn, increased friction between the northeast and southern

wings of the Republican Party. Direct conflict arose in late 1801 when northeastern Republicans joined with local Federalists to defeat a bill which would have compelled an employer hiring a black to publish a description of his outer appearance in two newspapers.

The conservative stand of southern Republicans with respect to the slavery issue did not prevent the quick and unanimous congressional passage of a bill in 1807 forbidding the introduction of new black slaves into the country after January 1, 1808 (the date set by the framers of the Constitution back in 1787). There was a simple economic reason for this: the southern planters' need for slaves had been met through natural reproduction. The cotton states constantly had a surfeit of black slaves and could therefore satisfy the tobacco-growing region's greater need. But even though the law forbidding the importation of slaves did not alter the foundations of slaveownership in the country, it must be considered one of President Jefferson's personal accomplishments. It was he who forced Congress to address the matter as early as 1806, two years before the expiration of the period set by the Federal Constitution for allowing black slaves to be brought into the country.

Along with the rejection of the hated Alien and Sedition Acts, the Jeffersonian Republicans are remembered for their political measures to reform the court system. During the last months of John Adams's presidency, the US Congress significantly altered the federal court system, considerably increasing the number of judges. It soon became clear that Congress had acted for purely partisan reasons: the Federalists filled the new positions with their own men, and President Adams approved the appointments during his last day in office (referred to in history as Adams's midnight appointments). In this way the Federalists were successful in sweetening the bitter taste of the presidential election defeat and simultaneously blocked the path of the Republican Party's reformativ plans with a powerful bastion of conservative federal judges.



John Marshall

In his first address to Congress, an irate Jefferson demanded that the judicial law of 1801 be revoked. The Republicans swiftly prepared a corresponding bill and passed it in both houses. The Jeffersonians were pleased not only to have eliminated their political opponents from important positions but also because, in weakening the federal judicial system, they had significantly strengthened their party's doctrine of "states' rights."⁴⁷

In seeking to implement judicial reforms the Jeffersonians met with the adamant resistance of the Supreme Court, which strongly opposed reforms. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, who in effect became the leader of the Federalist Party at the beginning of the 19th century, took an especially conservative position. In 1803, after reviewing the case of William Marbury, one of Adams's "midnight appointments" who had been removed from office, the Chief Justice proclaimed the right of the Supreme Court to determine the constitutionality of any law passed by Congress. This first Supreme Court decision in the history of the USA was enabling the court to block Republican reforms.

Jefferson met the challenge of the country's

highest judicial body. At his initiative, Republican leaders endeavored to remove from office the most odious Federalist judges by impeachment. After successfully replacing District Court Judge John Pickering, they turned to Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase.

Chase was well known throughout the country, primarily for his harsh court verdicts against democrats. In 1803, he publicly censured Maryland legislatures for revoking the state's property qualification for voting and declared that the reforms of the Republican Party would undermine private property and individual freedom.⁴⁸ Impeachment procedure was instituted against Chase on the grounds that he had misused his official authority. However, much to the Jefferson administration's displeasure, the reactionary federal judge was exonerated: in the protracted Senate hearings a group of Republican congressmen spoke out in his defense. The decision brought to an end the Republicans' campaign against Federalist judges, a campaign which had a clearly political and undeniably democratic character.

The Republican Party and administration's military doctrine was based on democratic ideals. As President, Jefferson continued to maintain the principle, characteristic of the ideology of the Enlightenment, that the formation and support of a regular army and navy in times of peace was not in keeping with the fundamentals of democratic government. In his personal correspondence and confidential conversations, and in his public speeches and annual addresses to Congress, Jefferson insistently argued that in peacetime the states should rely exclusively on volunteer militias. He suggested that these units accept young Americans from 18 to 26 years of age who would study military art in their spare time. Jefferson wanted to gradually reduce the country's standing army until it was entirely demobilized. Already in the early period of the Republican administration, the army had been reduced by more than one-third: from 5,438 to 3,312 men, most of whom were scattered into small companies serving at frontier garrisons.⁴⁹

The navy was also sharply reduced. At the end of the first year of the Republican administration, government reports registered the sale of 15 frigates. Congress passed a decision to keep 13 frigates, but only six of these were to be kept in active service.⁵⁰ The Republican naval doctrine proposed an American fleet consisting entirely of small coast guard vessels.

The Jeffersonians' democratic military doctrine was shattered when Anglo-American contradictions sharply increased in 1807. During the time of crisis, the Republicans were forced to act against their wishes and sanction greater military expenditures.

Like his life, Jefferson's presidency was characterized by contradictions, which are especially apparent when comparing his actions and ideals. Many historians have accused him of insincerity and hypocrisy and rated him as a typical representative of the bourgeois-planter elite. In Gore Vidal's novel *Burr*, the protagonist, who killed Hamilton in a duel and was subsequently accused by President Jefferson of trying to divide the country, is similarly critical: "He is sometimes known as the Great Leveller of society. Actually the only levelling he ever did was of me." However, most of Jefferson's critics depart from the laws of historical analysis, judging his inconsistencies without considering the contradictions of his time and the evolution of his philosophical views.

It is impossible to give a one-dimensional evaluation of Jefferson's life. Like many great historical personalities who lived during times of revolutionary upheavals and sharp turns of fate, Jefferson was forced to meet the changing historical circumstances by carefully reevaluating his attitudes and ideals. Many of Jefferson's bourgeois revolutionary contemporaries exhibited the same erratic evolution of character. Take, for example, Napoleon Bonaparte, who started out as a Jacobin republican yet at one point wore the crown of emperor.

Jefferson's life may be divided into different stages, each of which is itself significant both for the character development of the man and for American

Jefferson in 1821



history. During the prerevolutionary and revolutionary period, Jefferson was a leading democrat in the patriotic movement, proposing many daring ideas that have become part of America's democratic heritage and to this day serve as a source of inspiration for progressive forces in the USA.

In his later life he took a more moderate position, a logical development since the political fray required him to make concessions to more conservative allies in the Republican Party. His moderation was most evident during the years of his presidency. But even the obvious shortcomings of his actions as President cannot detract from the positive results he achieved while in power. It was the conscientious efforts of Jefferson and his circle that strengthened bourgeois-democratic trends in the development of American society, which had been curbed by the Federalists.

The inconsistency exhibited between Jefferson's ideals and political actions, his concessions and compromises to moderate and conservative circles can be explained by a number of factors: the relationship of class forces in the USA during the first decades of independence; Jefferson's desire to implement his principles only within the framework and on the



Independence Day celebration in Philadelphia, July 4, 1819

basis of the bourgeois-democratic institutions established during the War of Independence; his lifelong ties with the slaveowning community; and his faith in the propitious conditions that the USA, by right of nature, possessed for democratic experiments. The summation and relative relationship of these and many other objective and subjective factors which shaped the life of this American democrat help provide an understanding into his "mistakes," "misjudgements" and inconsistencies.

JAMES MADISON: ILLUSIONS OF THE
"GREAT CONCILIATOR"

In 1962 the historian Irving Brant was invited to the White House library to autograph his recently completed six-volume biography of James Madison¹. President John F. Kennedy, who found the time to attend this ceremony, remarked at one point to Brant, "Madison is the most underrated President in American history."² Kennedy's words contained easily discernible praise for the White House guest, implying that Brant, who had labored a quarter of a century over this opus, had helped remedy this injustice regarding the fourth President of the United States.

Brant's work rapidly gained recognition among US historians as well, who accepted the biographer's assessments of Madison and began to make use of them in their own research. No attempts were made to refute these assessments. Moreover, as one volume after another of the biography was published, other historians clearly began to lose any desire to delve into and develop the Madison theme. One reason for this was that Brant had, it seemed, collected everything that could possibly be extracted from the archives concerning the life of the fourth President (thus contributing in no small way to the successful preparation and publication, beginning in 1962, of the multi-volume collected papers of Madison).³ However, if we look at his work from another perspective, from the point of view of his systematiza-

tion and subsequent interpretation of archival data, it becomes clear to us that we are dealing with an openly apologetic work.

Brant's lengthy eulogy overshadows earlier critical biographies of Madison⁴ in at least one respect. Unlike Brant, who detected no flaws in the political career of his subject, other authors assumed that Madison was a deep thinker (he has gone down in history as the "philosopher of the American Constitution"), that he was eminently successful as an ideological leader of the Continental Congress at the time of the War of Independence and as head of the Republican opposition in the 1790s, but that the brilliant Founding Father did not, alas, excel either as Secretary of State or as US President at the beginning of the 19th century.

However, neither these biographies nor the work of Brant explain the many complications and vicissitudes which characterized the political life of the fourth President. The most important aspect of his political career, which spanned half a century, is that it was woven out of strange and seemingly paradoxical zigzags, sharp turns and shifts from one political camp to another. After starting as a staunch defender of the interests of planter-dominated Virginia and a champion of states' rights, he abruptly abandoned this position in the early 1780s and became an outspoken advocate of a strong national government. By a quirk of fate this southern slaveowner came to play a major role in the framing of the Federal Constitution of 1787, an instrument which summed up the results of the American Revolution. But as early as the 1790s Madison, who had spearheaded the federalist movement along with Hamilton, broke off with his political allies and closed ranks with Jefferson heading the Republican Party along with him.

Many contemporaries viewed the political twists and turns of Madison as the result of his predilection for unprincipled bargaining. This view seems superficial. The fact of the matter is that Madison's evolution was a reflection of the contradictions besetting

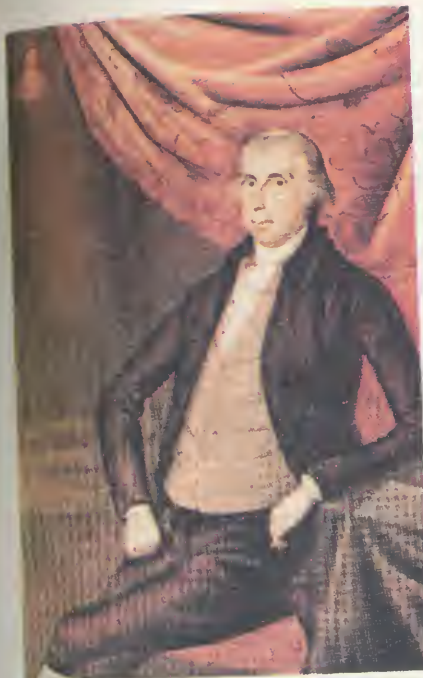
James Madison's
parents, Nelly Conway
Madison and
James Madison, Sr.



the historical development of the young republic, in particular the complicated relations of two classes that acted as rulers of the destiny—the northeastern bourgeoisie and the southern slaveowning planters.

"My Country Is Virginia"

The first Madison, John, stepped foot on the shores of America in 1652. He settled in Virginia where he promptly obtained property rights to a 600-acre plot of land. As a result of this he became a planter of average means. The life of future generations of Madisons was predetermined: it was subordinate to the gratification of the ruling passion of planter families colonial—the aggrandizement of land holdings. The possibility for doing this increased dramatically in Virginia in the early 18th century



following the dashing raid of the local governor Spotswood deep into the upcountry. Spotswood declared that henceforth the boundaries of the colony entrusted to him extended from ocean to ocean.

Spotswood's proclamation had no legal basis, a fact, however, that did not in the least bother Virginian landowners. The first to take advantage of the apportionment of new lands were the governor's close associates and friends. One of them, James Taylor, got hold of large allotment measuring 13,500 acres. Ambros Madison, Taylor's son-in-law and a representative of the third-generation Madisons in America, was apportioned more than 2 thousand acres. His sole heir, James Madison, Sr., the father of the future President, inherited vast land holdings and some 30 black slaves. At the time James Madison, Jr., was born (March 16, 1751), the Madisons were one of the two wealthiest and most influential fami-

lies of Orange county (the other were the Taylors who gave the country its 12th President—Zachary Taylor).

Having become firmly established as property owners, the Madisons began to take on the habits, manner and propensities characteristic of English gentlemen. James Madison, Sr., unlike his predecessors, paid decidedly serious attention to the education of his heirs. At the age of 11, James, Jr., was sent to a private school where he was indoctrinated in the works of the Greek and Roman writers.

Later, while studying at Princeton University, located in the small Atlantic-seaboard colony of New Jersey, the young Madison became acquainted with the major philosophers, jurists and historians of the classical and modern world.

Government and law were Madison's favorite subjects in college. He was an extremely diligent student and later could not even remember whether, during his years of study, he had ever slept more than 3 hours a day.⁵ The young man's greatest ordeal was not, however, his protracted vigils over abstruse texts but the sudden onset of a troubling and grave illness. Madison never defined his illness, and physicians of that day were at a loss to determine its precise nature. Years later, his brother-in-law, John C. Payne, wrote that at the time of the colonies' revolt against Britain, Madison was deterred from military service by a predisposition to epileptic-like seizures. In this matter we may trust Brant who believes that "his mature age at the onset of the seizures, and the complete disappearance of them identify the illness as epileptiform hysteria."⁶

In 1772, Madison, who was experiencing a constant state of melancholy, left Princeton and spent the next four years exclusively at his family's estate in Orange county. His ailments persisted and the words of his best friend William Bradford to the effect that weak people pay greater attention to their health and often outlive those with naturally robust constitutions scarcely comforted him (Bradford's words proved to be prophetic in Madison's case,

for the latter lived to be 85). While in Orange he came to reflect more and more on God and religion. He began to believe, perhaps owing to his own misfortune, in the necessity of professing tolerance in one's earthly existence. Madison was quick to reveal himself as an advocate of religious freedom and as early as 1774 wrote in a letter to Bradford that had the power of the Church of England established itself as firmly in all the North American colonies as it had done in Virginia, slavery and subjection would have become the inevitable lot of the colonists.⁷

From infrequent newspapers and letters Madison learned of the anti-British movement then gathering strength in the colonies. At the time the patriotic movement in the colonies was already entering a radical phase of development and causing diverse trends to take shape. The leaders of these trends produced scores of pamphlets in which they defined their goals and the methods for achieving them. The Orange county recluse was not acquainted with these political pamphlets, and politics interested him far less than religious issues. Nevertheless, he sympathized with the patriotic movement as a whole and with its most decisive actions. In early 1774 he expressed his heartfelt support for the Boston Sons of Liberty who had dumped chests of tea from British ships into the Boston harbor. In the fall of that same year, he applauded the decision of the recently convened First Continental Congress in Philadelphia concerning a united campaign of the colonies for boycotting goods from Britain.

The possibility of a military conflict between North America and Britain did, however, alarm Madison. He especially feared that in this matter the black slaves would side with the redcoats in the hope of gaining freedom. When the question of his attitude to the slaves arose, vested interests and the inherited instincts of a Virginia planter prevailed over Madison's acquired religious convictions about the redeeming qualities of ecumenical tolerance. He remained steadfast in his belief that should black slaves ever attempt to avail themselves of the squabbles between

the owners and the British, then these attempts had to be exposed and suppressed.⁸

After the onset of fighting between the king's soldiers and the patriots in April 1775 the Virginia legislators ordered the creation of a security council in the colony. The council quickly proceeded to form squads of militiamen and in October 1775 the 24-year-old Madison was commissioned colonel of the Orange county militia. The most Madison managed to accomplish in this capacity was to acquire a skill in shooting at targets from a distance of 100 yards. He never had occasion to fire at live targets. Shortly thereafter the Virginians called upon Madison to serve in an altogether different capacity.

In April 1776, the governor of Virginia Lord Dunmore fled to the Norfolk-Hampton area in order to join the Loyalist groups there. Imperial rule in one of the oldest American colonies came to an end. Local patriots sought the advice from the Continental Congress on how best to deal with the situation. Philadelphia's reply—create a new government—fully accorded with the desires of the Virginians. Elections were set to decide who would sit in the constituent convention. Two candidates sought the two seats as delegates from Orange county—James Madison and a member of the Taylor family. Both of them took their seats in the constituent convention which opened in Williamsburg in May 1776.

The first matter taken up by the convention did not concern local needs but rather the fate of North America as a whole. Such pretensions by the Virginia delegates neither surprised nor drew discontent from the residents of other colonies, for Virginia had long been recognized as a leader of the patriotic movement (this status was predetermined by circumstances, as the number of inhabitants in this colony equaled a quarter of the population of the 13 colonies and the administration of the patriotic stratum lay in the hands of firmly established planters who were respected for their wealth). By the spring of 1776 the convention came to hold strongly that the Continental Congress was taking too long in draw-



George Mason

ing up a proclamation of independence. It therefore instructed its representatives in Philadelphia to display the needed initiative on this issue (on June 7, Virginia's delegate to the Continental Congress Richard Henry Lee submitted a resolution of independence and on July 4, 1776 Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence prepared by another Virginian, Thomas Jefferson).

The convention then proceeded without delay to draft its own constitution. The Virginia convention formed a committee of 30 men to draw up a constitution and a declaration of rights. Madison's inclusion in it was a great honor for the Orange county delegate but he did not exert any appreciable influence on the committee's work.

This is certainly not due to any failings in Madison's erudition, which was no less than that of the other delegates, nor to his youth. In his knowledge of law and other subjects that he had studied daily for several years at Princeton and then during his solitary life in Orange, Madison surpassed most of the committee delegates. And as for his age, several important seats in the convention were held by younger men: the convention's secretary Henry Tazewell

was 23, and the state's first attorney-general Edmund Randolph, 22. But neither they, nor seasoned delegates could compete in popularity with one of the 30 members of the committee recognized as the patriots' intellectual fountainhead—George Mason, who in the absence of Richard Henry Lee and Thomas Jefferson was looked upon as an oracle of every conceivable truth. He was entrusted to frame both the declaration of rights and the constitution.

The Virginia Declaration of Rights, with certain amendments, served as the basis for similar documents in other states and as a guide for the socio-philosophical part of the Declaration of Independence and, when compared to the latter, enjoyed no less—perhaps even more—popularity among contemporaries both in America and in Europe. Madison saw, however, one flaw in Mason's draft. Whereas Mason, who had shown himself to be a disciple of Locke, proposed to enunciate in the declaration only a principle of tolerance toward religions not established by the State, Madison, in keeping with a tradition of independent thinking, insisted on the recognition of religious freedom.

It is difficult to say what Madison's attitude was in 1776 to the Virginia constitution, framed according to Mason's draft. Nine years later he sharply denounced it from a moderate stance. He was not satisfied by Mason's treatment of the principle of separation of powers which was aimed at aggrandizing the role of the legislative assembly, granting it the traditional prerogatives of the executive power and diminishing the importance of the latter. He did not like the restrictions imposed on the governor's power by the executive council, the only minimal distinctions between the senate and the house of representatives, the excessively large legislature and overly frequent reelections of all bodies of power. Subsequently, those features of the Virginia constitution which Madison found politically unacceptable were, in the first years of the War of Independence, embodied in the government systems of the majority of states. The country experienced a mighty surge in democratic



Philadelphia in the days of James Madison

spirit which was reflected in the political life of planter-dominated Virginia.

The start of Madison's career as a politician seemed most promising. He was elected member of the first Virginia Executive Council of the State and later reelected for a second term. This rather high, though not the highest, public office was to represent for many years the peak of his career. When Richard Henry Lee and Jefferson returned to Williamsburg after their tenure in the Continental Congress expired, and they began, together with Patrick Henry and George Mason, to alternately replace one another as governor and as leaders of the state legislature, Madison had no chances of making his way into this politically powerful quartet and had to regard his election in 1779 as a delegate from Virginia to the Continental Congress as a stroke of good fortune.

He arrived in Philadelphia where the Continental Congress was in session with the firm intention of defending the interests of his home state. During his first years of work in Congress the young delegate's

notions about the geographical boundaries of his homeland came to be encapsulated in the frequently repeated formula "My country is Virginia." Parochial considerations held sway over the actions of representatives from other states as well and at the time of his first appearance in Congress Madison felt himself the object of numerous sharp glances assessing the abilities and talents of the new political rival.

The members of Congress, having already formed an image of Virginia planters from the aristocratically stately appearances of Washington and Jefferson, were not a little awe-struck by the sight of the new southern delegate. Before them was a man of modest height, thin, lame in one leg, pale as a ghost and emaciated from ill health. For those who attempted to make contact with him outside Congress, the Virginian came across as the most unsociable creature on earth. In Congress itself he could be observed only intermittently (he often returned to his home for long periods because of sickness). Only gradually, as if according to some carefully outlined plan, did Madison reveal himself to be an outstanding statesman.

When Madison arrived at the Continental Congress the states were engaged in a grueling debate over the terms of their entering a single American union. The 1777 draft of the Articles of Confederation which was put before the states carefully stipulated the sovereignty of their governments in all important spheres of socio-economic and political activity. This draft satisfied the colonists and only one provision, and a very important one at that, concerning the delegation to the states of the right to dispose of their lands as defined in the colonial deeds, gave rise to bitter dispute among the states.

Opinions on this issue were expressed by the so-called landless states whose boundaries according to colonial statutes were clearly defined and which, owing to a provision enumerated in the Articles of Confederation, were denied access to the vast unsettled lands of the West. The legislators of Maryland were particularly refractory, refusing to ratify

the Articles until property rights to the vacant western lands were transferred to Congress. Maryland and other landless states stood in opposition to a group of states, led by Virginia and New York, whose boundaries had not been previously fixed and which now stretched westward all the way to the Pacific seaboard.

In legislative terms, the demands of the landless states would mean creating a very important condition for augmenting the strength of the national government. But this did not in any way mean that the legislators of these states were ruled by lofty national considerations. After arming himself with all the appropriate information he could obtain, Madison convincingly showed the members of Congress that the Maryland politicians were backed by lobbyists from three private land companies which had purchased vast territories from the Indians for a trifle and would readily produce their deeds of purchase to the Continental Congress were the latter to be granted rights over western lands.

For their part, the land speculators and the Maryland legislators, who had eagerly accepted bribes from these companies, did everything in their power to cast slurs on their Virginian colleagues. They invoked the help of the "vox populi": the Continental Congress was flooded with petitions from residents of western counties of Maryland who called for an end to the monopolistic claims of Virginia. They enlisted Benjamin Franklin (who was himself involved in one of the land companies) as their spokesman and succeeded in availing themselves of the incomparable writing skills of the herald of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine, who had been reduced to penury.⁹ As a result of the campaign launched by the land companies the mercenary motives of Virginia were fully brought to light. It was shown that whereas the patriots of all states had conjointly shed their blood on the battlefields the greedy Virginian planters, in gross disregard for the public good, were doing their utmost to derive all the benefits of the newly proclaimed independence. There was as much verac-

ity in the land companies' exposure of the motives of the Virginians as there was in the latter's exposure of the concealed interests of the landless states.

Madison called upon his countrymen to stand firmly united against Maryland. He favored the idea of forming a confederation of 12 states, that is, minus unyielding Maryland. Virginia, however, began having doubts about its position in 1779, when New York relinquished its claims to western territories. The southerners contrived a maneuver: they agreed to grant Congress the right to dispose of their western territories provided that the deeds of purchase to these lands, which belonged to their fellow planters, would be honored and the deeds of the land speculators of other states, nullified. Both Congress and Maryland consented to this and the confederation became legalized in the fifth year of the states' independence.

The Virginians, who had hoped to bestow a Greek gift on Congress and Maryland, grossly miscalculated. As soon as the Articles of Confederation entered into force, the landless states, led by Maryland, openly repudiated what they regarded as illegal and absurd provisos for Virginia's cession of its western lands. In a dazzling display of erudition, Madison swiftly branded the perfidious action of the Marylanders as the most flagrant violation of agrarian justice since the time of the Gracchus brothers. In communiques to the legislators of his state he demanded that under no circumstances must the stipulated terms of the Virginian "gift" be renounced and, arguing that the confederation would scarcely last after the end of the war, plainly hinted at the need, given this prospect, to be concerned with the state's advantage above all else.¹⁰

The regional motives of Madison became apparent also in his attitude to the financial policy of Congress. In 1781, Congress named Robert Morris, a Pennsylvania banker, as its first Superintendent of Finance believing that since he had succeeded better than anyone else in amassing a fortune for himself during the war, he could likewise do better than anyone else

in managing the economic affairs of Congress. Morris demanded for himself dictatorial powers in enacting economic policies and called for a number of sweeping reforms.

First, he proposed that Congress be granted the right to levy a 5 percent import duty in order to replenish the federal treasury, since it had proven impossible to seek voluntary contributions from the states as envisioned in the Articles of Confederation. The treasury was empty, while the government had to pay off millions of dollars in foreign loans as well as come up with funds to remunerate its own army. Madison backed this measure, for it was the only way to save the government from bankruptcy. But when Morris proposed to create, under the aegis of the central government, a national bank whose purpose would be to regulate currency and credit operations, Madison and other southerners firmly opposed this measure as unconstitutional. They perceived such a national bank primarily as a means of creating a financial monopoly and thus increasing the wealth of northeastern bankers.

Madison did not deny the need for a bank in general but advised Morris to create it under the auspices of the Pennsylvania legislature. The proposal was enthusiastically supported by southerners. Morris swallowed this bitter Virginian pill in silence. Then he went to Congress with a maneuver that would eventually put the Virginians in a bind. Calculating his move, he took his proposal for a bank to Congress the day after the Pennsylvania legislature had adjourned. At that point there was nowhere the southerners could send Morris with his proposal and so, as Madison tells us, they were compelled to agree to his plan.

The Making of a Nationalist

Madison's transformation into a supporter of a more centralized government was decidedly abrupt and occurred literally in the course of a year. Clearly,

however, this marked shift in his attitude could not have resulted from a mere change of mood. Profound reasons underlay this move.

In 1782 the number of politicians who favored a central government that wielded greater powers than its constituent states (opponents referred to such people as nationalists but they preferred to call themselves Federalists) could be counted on one hand. Almost all of them were representatives of financial and trade circles. Alexander Hamilton and Robert Morris were among their more outspoken leaders. Directly economic motives lay behind their interest in seeing a more powerful central government. They had been creditors of the Continental Congress and had taken all sorts of orders, etc., from it. But what was it about the Federalists that attracted Madison, a spokesman for planters and farmers?

Foreign policy considerations no doubt preponderated among those reasons that initially prompted Madison to become a federalist. He was perfectly aware of the foreign-policy problems facing the republic. Foreign affairs were administered by Congress as a whole and Madison quite frequently took part in discussions concerning relations between the USA and its West European allies. It was no secret to Madison that clearly mercenary motives on the part of the courts of France and Spain lay behind their alliances with the USA, both viewing Americans as dreadful commoners in republican garb. He was outraged by the intentions of France and Spain to designate the Allegheny Mountains as the western boundary of the US, appropriate the unsettled western lands for themselves in return for their participation in the struggle against Britain, and limit the commercial fishing zones and shipping rights of the states.

The members of Congress were outraged at the insults which their envoys in Western Europe had suffered. John Jay, who had been sent on a diplomatic mission to Spain, complained of being treated as a private party from the "colonies and plantations." Even after recognizing the USA, West European powers refused to treat the republic as an equal. From

these facts Madison extrapolated that only under the leadership of a single government invested with extensive rights and authorities could the USA command respect and defend its interests with its allies and in the international arena. In 1782, after Americans had gained a decisive victory over Britain and were engaged in negotiating the terms of peace, Louis XVI sharply repudiated the claims of the states to the territories west of the Allegheny, alleging that before the revolution these lands had been owned by the British monarchy and not the colonies which had neither fixed boundaries nor legal rights. Madison replied to the French king that the US had to be regarded in many respects as a single and indivisible sovereign state which had taken on those rights from the British Crown which could not belong to any one colony.

Imbued more and more by the national concerns of the US, Madison had no choice but to stand in opposition to the Virginian politicians who continued to live solely in accordance with their provincial interests and prejudices. He hurled a challenge at the Virginia legislature when in the fall of the 1782 he proposed in a series of letters to grant Congress unconditional rights to western lands.¹¹ And he drove a wedge in his relations with both the legislators of his state and the representatives from Virginia in the Continental Congress by his outspoken stand in favor of a revision of the Confederation's financial system.

In 1782, the financial situation of Congress was critical: for the entire preceding year not one member of the Confederation, except for Pennsylvania, had contributed a penny to the federal treasury. In reply to the army's demands for payment Morris declared that he was washing his hands of the matter and placing the entire burden of liability on the states. It was at this time that all hopes were dashed of ever obtaining from the states a ratification of the bill to invest Congress with the right to impose a 5 percent import duty. In November 1781, tiny Rhode Island, exercising the right granted to each state to veto any amendment to the Articles of Confederation, declared that

it would never agree to such a bill (Rhode Island's import of goods was relatively greater than that of the other states and it feared that its share of proceeds to the federal treasury might prove to be excessive). This triggered something of a chain reaction in the other states which had previously agreed to a federal import duty and they began to go back on their decisions. Virginia was one of the first to do this. Madison declared the conduct of the Rhode Islanders and the Virginians to be equally irresponsible.

In 1782-1783 Madison, acting against the will of the Virginia legislators, proposed a plan for radically reforming the entire system of taxation. It envisaged not only the collection of an import duty by the central government, but also a change in the method of domestic taxation. According to the Articles of Confederation the amount of money transferred by the states to the federal treasury was proportional to the value of their land. Such a method of taxation infringed upon the interests of the New England states where land cost more than in the South; moreover, it was thoroughly ineffective in that the states could not agree on the value of their lands and tried to understate it as much as possible. Madison believed it was possible to seriously discuss the proposal of the Northeastern states to apportion taxes among the members of the Confederation according to the size of their territories or the number of their inhabitants.¹² Many Virginia legislators were ready to brand Madison a traitor after this, for Virginia was the largest state both in territory and in population. The northerners, however, praised Madison as a wise and great conciliator.

More and more frequently the delegates to Congress came to observe open bickering between Madison and his Virginia colleagues in Philadelphia. He waged a particularly intense battle of words with Arthur Lee, well known for circulating malicious rumors about Benjamin Franklin while the two were on a diplomatic mission in France (Lee even accused him of pilfering public funds). Named a Virginia delegate to the Continental Congress on his return

from Paris, Lee colored his speeches with quotes from Montesquieu and Voltaire. Investing Congress, which had the army under its command, with the right of taxation, he declaimed before the delegates, would be equivalent to putting the sword and the purse in the same hands and this contradicted the teachings of the great French philosophers.

Madison showed his fellow congressmen how grossly Lee had distorted Montesquieu. The French philosopher, he said, was against putting the sword and purse in the hands of only one branch of power—the executive, but seeing that Congress was both an executive and a legislative power, it was possible to invest it with the rights to levy taxes and command an army.¹³ (Madison, like Lee, distorted Montesquieu in his own way, for the French enlightener had not foreseen the possibility of uniting two powers in one organ, as was the case in the Continental Congress.)

From 1783, Madison, who had hitherto rigorously favored a strict adherence to the Articles of Confederation began to call for a broad interpretation of the instrument. This included finding the "implied" rights of Congress in the Articles. Madison argued that since the Articles of Confederation authorized Congress to contract loans, maintain an army and determine the amount of money needed to cover its general expenses, it could therefore be "implied" from the Articles that Congress had the right to find ways of paying off its debts and replenishing its treasury. And if certain means proved ineffective for this purpose then any other means could be adopted. Madison's attempt at a broad interpretation of the Articles of Confederation did not, however, produce the slightest impression on the delegates. Alexander Hamilton, the delegate from New York who took his seat in Congress in 1783, did not see any benefit in a "broad interpretation" of the Articles and proposed to simply rewrite them from a Federalist stand.

Madison's years of congressional service, which had enabled him to look at American problems through the eyes of the central government, were no doubt a

The young James Madison



great help to him in overcoming his submissive attachment to regional interests. However, his ever growing desire to save the Union, even if it entailed forfeiting the interests of his home state, did not settle well at all with the Virginia legislature which had delegated Madison to Congress. This circumstance helps at least in part to understand why 1783 was the last year of Madison's commission in Philadelphia.

Madison returned home to Orange in the fall of 1783 in extremely low spirits. Added to the nettlesome awareness of his political setbacks was a personal tragedy. In the spring of 1782 he had struck up a romance with the daughter of a Rhode Island delegate—the very attractive 15-year-old Kitty Floyd. The designs of the 31-year-old Virginian were most earnest. In the spring of 1783 he saw the Floyd family off to Rhode Island, hoping shortly thereafter to go there himself for the betrothal. The first letter from the Floyds reached him in August and made it plain that Kitty had become engaged to a 19-year-old medical student. Madison, whose romance had been

Kitty Floyd



witnessed by all in Congress, took the blow quite hard although he still hoped for a more propitious turn of fate.

The Philosophy of the American Constitution

Madison did not remain long at the family estate in Orange. He could no longer imagine a life without politics and in the very next Virginia assembly elections held in the spring of 1784 he won seat as one of its deputies. The historical development of the USA entered a new phase after peace had been concluded with Britain the previous year. The Federalist movement, with which Madison felt he had linked his destiny, continued to gather strength. As before, it developed under the influence of a complex set of foreign-policy, economic and social problems. But in the postwar years it was the country's worsening social contradictions that came to have an increasing impact on its evolution.

The origin and growth of the Federalist movement,

the crowning glory of which was the adoption of the US Constitution in 1787-1788, is distinguished by two stages.

In the first stage—from the end of the 1770s through 1783—the primary goal pursued by the Federalist movement was the granting of broad economic functions to the Continental Congress. Its platform included demands for major domestic (on terms favorable to large creditors) and foreign loans, the creation of a national bank in order to pay the national war debt and make optimum use of the country's capital, the investiture of the Continental Congress with the right of sovereignty over the unsettled western lands, and also measures aimed at creating Congress's own financial funds. The economic platform of the Federalists plainly favored the interests of the northeastern commercial and financial bourgeoisie. No wonder, its representatives were in the lead among the Federalists. Their demands, so often repeated, for granting Congress "the rights of the purse" included the right to demand payment from states failing to honor their financial obligations.

The social motive of the Federalists—the operation of a central power to control and suppress mass movements—took shape in the second stage of their development, in the period from 1783 through 1789 when class contradictions were rocking the country and when it was becoming clear that the states not submitting to a single higher will were unable to cope not only with the financial and economic chaos but also with the social turmoil. The fact that the Federalists had put forward first economic demands and then social ones, does not mean, of course, that the US government was granted first economic functions and then social ones. Both functions of government were granted simultaneously but at the beginning of the revolution they were concentrated in the state governments, for the role of the central government at that time was not particularly significant. The Federalists pressed for granting these functions, that is to say, functions far greater than those disposed of by the state governments, not to government in

general but rather specifically to the central government. A distinctive, historically conditioned feature in the evolution of the Federalists' platform was that they initially pushed for broadening the economic and then the social functions of the government.

The second stage of the Federalist movement was marked by a sharp rise in the number of politicians representing wealthy planters who, quite obviously, had no less of an interest in protecting their large property holdings from mass radical movements than did the northeastern bourgeoisie. And their ideological leader, Madison, assumed the role of the philosopher of the American Constitution of 1787.

Between 1784 and 1786, Madison, unlike many other Virginia politicians, displayed a keen interest not only in the problems of the planter class but also in the postwar difficulties faced by the northeastern bourgeoisie. He was alarmed by the news that after peace had been concluded British vessels once again were beginning to fill American ports and the almighty firms of the former parent state showed every intention of monopolizing all goods leaving and entering the country without even resorting to the imperial whip. This situation was made possible by the states' lack of political solidarity as well as by mutual jealousies and rivalries among them. Thus, while Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania tried to stave off British competition with high protectionist duties, Connecticut, New Jersey and Delaware nullified their efforts by declaring their ports open to all vessels. Madison got wind of rumors that the Bostonians, despairing of dealing with British competition by means of economic sanctions, fired upon and sank three British merchant ships that had entered their harbor.

Madison genuinely sympathized with his "northern brothers" and at the same time felt indignant toward the Virginian planters who had transported their tobacco and cotton not on American but on English vessels because it proved to be cheaper. He called upon the planters to be guided in this matter not by purely economic factors but by patriotic considera-

tions and to give the money for shipping tobacco and cotton to their northern brothers and not to those people who did not yet deserve to be called friends. In the postwar years Madison swore his allegiance to the principles of mercantilism, and stood united on this issue with the northeastern Federalists. Free trade, he wrote in 1785 to Jefferson, was the best system in theory, but for the USA to practice it at that time would be tantamount to economic enslavement by England.¹⁴

The Virginians had their reasons too for seeking a strict centralized economic policy toward Britain. One of the terms of the peace treaty confronted them with the problem of repaying war debts to British bankers. The planters, however, were not only unable to pay them off but were also sinking more and more into debt. Virginians wanted to lean on a strong central government also in a dispute with Spain over shipping rights on the lower Mississippi. Madison did everything possible in order to exploit these interests of Virginia to achieve the aims of the Federalists. In November 1785, he and his supporters in the local assembly succeeded in overcoming the resistance of Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee and in pushing through a resolution which called for delegating Congress with the right to regulate trade. In order to get the collective opinion of the states on this issue it was agreed to convene a congress of their representatives in Annapolis in September 1786.

To the great dismay of the Federalists, representatives of only 5 states appeared in Annapolis. They agreed to prepare a convention of all states in order to introduce necessary amendments into the Articles of Confederation. It was decided to call the convention in Philadelphia in May 1787.

The convention in Philadelphia proved to be a genuine triumph for the Federalists. It is hard to say whether their good fortune would have been as swift and complete if a rebellion led by Daniel Shays had not taken place in Massachusetts during the fall and winter of 1786-1787. This rebellion was the greatest show of strength in a series of popular attempts to

ease the burden of debt and gain greater control over the state governments. The fact of the Shays Rebellion was for the Federalist ideologues a most effective means of winning over the minds of those leaders of bourgeois-planter circles who were still undecided on the issue of granting far greater prerogatives to the central government. Madison did more than any other Federalist to obtain the support of George Washington who, in the fall of 1786, had still not decided whether a trip to Philadelphia was worth the time and money.

In the spring of 1787 Madison, who was staying in New York and maintaining close contact with the local Federalists led by Hamilton, sent letter after letter to Washington, Monroe and Randolph (the latter did not see the need for a radical revision of the Articles of Confederation but, as Madison noted, his opinion determined the stand of all Virginia). These letters greatly exaggerated the magnitude of the Shays's Rebellion, ascribed it more radical aims (Madison said that the rebels sought to do away with public and private debts and redistribute property), and overstated the danger to the republic of the monarchistic spirit which had gained ground in the New England states. Madison entreated Washington to preside over the Philadelphia Convention with the aim of protecting the federal government from an onslaught of democracy and the threat of monarchism.¹⁵ Certainly the northeastern Federalists had every reason to thank Madison for allying them with the South and for the fact that the most influential Virginia politicians sat in Philadelphia in May 1787. That spring Madison himself drew up an extremely detailed plan for revising the Articles of Confederation.

The Philadelphia Convention, which met from May through September 1787 was an assembly of like-minded politicians who wanted a federal constitution which not only would make the central government the highest executive, legislative and judicial power in the country but also eradicate the flaws which characterized the entire system of legislation



The Constitutional Convention in session

of the revolutionary period. These flaws were to be found, in their view, in the excessively democratic character of most of the state constitutions. Few delegates disagreed with this. The most outspoken of them was George Mason. However, more often than not his speeches were like a voice crying in the wilderness. But how the delegates heeded the opinions of his countryman James Madison! Mason could attribute his lot to fate: the man whom he had effortlessly relegated to a minor role when taking part in the 1776 committee to frame the Virginia declaration of rights and constitution was now lecturing him on how to understand democracy, republicanism, the separation of powers and the principle of checks and balances.

Madison plainly set about to direct the whole course of the convention. He had a certain basis for



doing this, which included not only his authority (Washington had more), but, above all, the fact that when it came to theory he perceived the aims of the convention far more fully and subtly than the majority of other delegates. Unlike many members of the convention who gathered their thoughts only while stepping up to the rostrum, Madison elaborated his ideas into a neat theory which he carefully worked out long before the convention.

Madison was the first in the convention to exhort that in framing a constitution it was essential to proceed from the awareness of deep social differences and contradictions in American society. His opinions concerning the social organization of society had already received wide publicity. Commonly referred to by historians as the doctrine of faction and factions (Madison himself used the term "classes"),¹⁶

these ideas were formulated the very year of the convention.

It is worthwhile noting that in the first years of independence the ideologues of the bourgeois-planter bloc considered the chief source of socio-political strife in the US not class-related antagonism but rather interstate clashes, their underlying causes invariably seen in economic rivalry and conflicting economic interests among the 13 sovereign members of the Confederation. And only under the growing influence of popular movements after 1783, particularly Shays's Rebellion, did the idea of equipollence of interstate rivalries and of conflicts between diverse social strata in weakening the authority of government begin to take shape. In the Constitutional Convention of 1787 a number of delegates already tended to see antagonism between the lower strata and the upper strata as the leading cause of socio-political strife in the US.

And yet even after the convention (probably in response to a sense of strong rivalries among different groups of states) Alexander Hamilton, for example, in his *Federalist* articles once again named interstate conflicts and rivalry between different social strata as the main factors weakening the stability of the US as a nation. Of these two factors, the issue of interstate rivalry was examined in much greater detail. It is characteristic that the notions of faction and factions, used, starting in 1786-1787, to designate opposing social strata and their clashes, were initially applied precisely in reference to interstate variances.

Madison also devoted a great deal of attention to interstate conflicts at the convention. He categorically asserted that the chief contradictions were those between slave-states and non-slave-states and that the distinctions resulted from the very institution of slavery. Madison, however, like many other leaders of the bourgeois-planter bloc, treated the contradictions between slave and non-slave-states solely as a problem concerning the criteria for political representation in the central government (in determining these criteria the planters demanded that the size of the slave popu-

lation in their states be taken into account). For the most part, the representatives of the bourgeois-planter bloc singled out economic and political reasons for the rivalries between the North and the South and did not emphasize their social aspects.

Madison showed a keen interest in the dispute between the large and the small states and also in the conflict between the eastern Atlantic-seaboard states and the new western states. It is interesting that a number of delegates sought to introduce a provision in the Federal Constitution regulating the formation of new states in the West in such a way that their total number would never exceed that of the Atlantic states. The reasoning of these delegates was patently undemocratic: they feared that commoners would always predominate among the congressmen of western states and that these commoners would always stand in opposition to the deputies of the "old" states. The prevailing point of view, however, was that the western states would probably never outnumber eastern states and that if such a danger in fact arose it would be dealt with by future delegates to Congress.¹⁷

Some delegates to the convention, in particular Hamilton, proposed a radical solution to the problem of interstate strife: to create a unitary national government and abolish state governments altogether. But the majority, Madison included, were not in favor of completely doing away with the political sovereignty of the states and at the same time moved to vest the federal government with the power to veto the decisions of the state legislatures and favored granting Congress indefinite and generally enunciated powers of the supreme legislature, in other words, giving it virtually unlimited legislative power. Their conception of the correlation of the powers of the states and of the central government was embodied in the so-called Virginia Plan presented to the convention at the very start of its session.

In the end the Constitutional Convention agreed upon a compromise regarding the correlation of states' and federal rights: the prerogatives of the feder-

al government were enumerated but each of them was defined in only broad terms. In No. 39 of *The Federalist* James Madison noted that the US Constitution instituted a government which was neither wholly national nor federal but rather based on a compromise of these two principles.

And yet Madison was among those delegates who, while rendering due to interstate variances, increasingly persisted in laying primary emphasis on the conflicts between social classes.

A view still widely held among revolutionary figures of that day was that of the social homogeneity of the white population in America. Thus even at the convention of 1787 some delegates pointed out that in the US there were no significant social distinctions, neither was there any reason to believe that such distinctions would ever arise (the vacant lands, in their view, served as an effective safeguard against the spread of poverty, impoverishment and hired labor in the US). The political conclusion they drew from such beliefs was that the federal government should be set up using the drafts of the state constitutions and incorporate their democratic features. These delegates asserted that there was no need to look for political antidotes to social antagonism in a country where it did not exist.¹⁸

Seen from the point of view of the ideological leaders of the Federalists, these assertions were filled with dangerous misconceptions which, at the start of the revolution, had found expression in the constitutions of the states. The result, in their opinion, was a subordination of the interests of the propertied elite to the interests of the lower multitude. It is essential, they argued, to avoid a repetition of these mistakes in the federal constitution which should be framed taking into account the social stratification of society and should incorporate a reliable mechanism protecting the interests of the propertied minority. Madison gave a theoretical basis to his ideas on factions and the repressive function of the federal government just before and during the convention. In his notes of March and April 1787 Madison identifies numerous

factions and an array of social, political and religious divisions within society (at the same time only the white population was included in his conception of society and its factions). But in his convention speeches as well as in his articles for *The Federalist* written in defense of the Constitution (only some of the articles were written by Madison, the others were penned by Alexander Hamilton and John Jay), Madison adhered to a one-dimensional approach to the division of society into factions, distinguishing only the minority and the majority and declaring the unequal distribution of property to be a permanent underlying factor in this division.¹⁹ It was conflicting interests between factions, Madison believed, that led to the institution of government. The biggest mistake of the framers of many state constitutions was, in his opinion, that they proceeded from false assumptions about the social homogeneity of American society, were unable to distinguish the faction of the more prosperous minority and did not succeed in properly representing its interests in the political system.

Naturally, Madison was not the only one who formulated the conception of faction. Earlier John Adams, for example, formulated his ideas on the social differentiation of society in his work *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States*, written at the end of 1786 (in it he did not defend all the state constitutions by any means but rather concentrated his attention on the Massachusetts constitution, framed with his help and marked by extreme moderation).

It is important to note that Adams elevated the social differentiation and all its derivative strife to a universal axiom or, to use today's terms, to a sociological law. Every society, he claimed, is invariably divided into two opposing parts: a privileged minority and a majority deprived of privileges. The formation of a privileged minority, according to Adams, presupposes a variety of factors: inequality in the amount of property inherited by people, inequality as regards the possibilities and means available to

people for accumulating wealth and, finally, the natural inequality of skill and talent inherent in human nature that allows one person to elevate himself above others.

A noteworthy feature of Adams's explanation of the ways in which American society is divided into an elitist minority and a majority, a feature that was later so graphically presented in Federalist theory as a whole, was his special emphasis on the role of economic factors in the origination of social inequality.

Another important aspect of Adams's thinking which then became a salient feature of Federalist theory was that he drew a clear distinction between the sources of the division of society into the minority and majority in the US and the feudal societies of Western Europe. In the US, as Adams and later Madison showed, inequality in property holdings underlay the division into factions, whereas in Western Europe this division rested on disparities in the inherited political and legal privileges of the aristocracy.

In establishing a qualitative distinction between the division of society into the elite and the lower strata in feudal Europe and bourgeois America, the Federalists were not always able to express this distinction terminologically. Thus Adams tended to use the words "natural aristocracy" to designate the upper strata of American society and what he viewed as the ideal elite, meaning that this elite, unlike the European elite, gained authority and power not by virtue of inherited privileges but by relying on inborn talents and enterprise. Unfortunately for Adams, not all his countrymen grasped the essence of his terminology, and many of them accused him of sympathizing with the hereditary aristocracy (even though Adams, like all Federalists, believed that the USA's superiority over feudal Europe lay in the fact that in his country the granting of titles and other class privileges had been completely done away with).

In order to designate social distinctions in society Madison and Hamilton used the safe and neutral term "factions"; its advantage, from a political point of view, was that the word could be used equally to de-

scribe both the upper and the lower strata of society. But when Madison spoke before the Constitutional Convention on June 25, he used the words "different classes" to refer to factions.

Madison's thoughts on the presence in the USA of acute socio-economic contrasts and on the prospect of their exacerbation in the future was a genuine revelation to some of the members of the Constitutional Convention. Roger Sherman and Charles Pinckney, for example, believed that there was only one source of distinction between people—hereditary privileges of a feudal nature. But the point of the American Revolution, in their views, was to be found precisely in the fact that it had done away with such privileges once and for all and, consequently, established a society of absolute harmony.

Madison pointedly rejected the view of American society as a single, homogeneous mass. In his speeches to the convention he laid bare the truth (while not condemning it he recommended that delegates be guided by it in determining the prospects of the USA's social development and in searching for an effective political solution to the inevitable problem of social strife) that although the revolution permanently eradicated one source of inequality (class distinctions) it gave free rein to another—freedom of competition.

An important social consequence of the unrestrained development of competition, Madison warned, was the rapid growth of the non-propertied majority. The faction of the majority would inevitably set itself equalizing goals and then the dangerous leveling spirit, the symptoms of which were still mild in the USA, would reveal itself in full force. In creating a political system that would endure for ages, Madison remarked while presenting his credo, it was essential to entrust the faction of the minority with reliable means of protecting its interests and of exercising control over the majority.²⁰

The firm belief of the Federalists in the economic origin of social divisions and faction is seen in their denial of the dependence of these factors on a polit-

ical system. Rebutting their opponents, who argued that social strife was characteristic only of monarchistic societies and was absent in a republican polity, they cited dozens of examples showing the presence of bitter class struggle in polities of a republican type: in ancient Rome, medieval Italian republics and, finally, in North America itself after it had gained its independence from the British Crown. Economic determinism was thus a characteristic feature of the sociological concept of the Federalists—both in their description of the nature of social division in society and of social hostility and in their views on the origin of government.

The views of Madison as well as of other Federalists (Hamilton, John Adams) on faction were nothing new. In the 17th and 18th centuries materialist notions about the causes of social distinctions in society and the social origins of government appeared every now and then in the rationalist sociological models prevailing at the time. The materialist approach was particularly evident in revolutionary periods (James Harrington expounded his materialist views around the time of the English revolution of the 17th century and Antoine Barnave, at the time of the French revolution of the late 18th century). However, the Federalist conception of faction was not adopted from the Europeans; it was a reflection of worsening economic distinctions and social contradictions in the states throughout the course of the American revolution.

While recognizing the materialist character of the sociological concept of the Federalists, it is essential at the same time to point out the groundless attempts of some historians to proclaim them as precursors of the Marxian analysis of social phenomena. That role can be ascribed to Madison and Hamilton no more than to the Englishman Harrington, whom they also tried to list as a precursor of historical materialism. The Federalists' analysis of social relations and the historical materialist method of analysis are clearly incompatible: the conclusions of Adams, Hamilton and Madison about social divisions and contradictions

were based on simple observations, common sense and intuition. They did not even possess the tools or abstract method of economic analysis used by their contemporary Adam Smith.

In characterizing the incompatibility of the principle of historical materialism and the Federalist concept of faction, it is essential to point out the altogether evident bourgeois class nature of the latter. Inherent in it is the typical narrowness of all bourgeois theories of classes and class struggle consisting in the inability to show the historical conditionality and, consequently, the transient character of antagonistic social contradictions that are called into being and exist only under certain modes of production. In the views of Hamilton and Madison classes and class struggle appear as ageless and indissoluble universal categories; their concepts are in the end an apology of the bourgeois world order which polarizes society into the indigent majority and the affluent minority.

The idea of annihilating or even reducing the distinctions between factions was heresy in the eyes of Federalists. Their conception of faction took on a patently undemocratic character after it was supported by the denial of the principle of the equality of political rights of different propertied classes. Madison pointed out that it was impossible to eliminate the causes of factional divisions but essential to find ways of controlling their consequences and he invariably added that the guiding principle of such control was the impermissibility of granting the unpropertied and scarcely propertied majority political power equal to that exercised by the elite. He told the convention that a government had to be structured in such a way as to guarantee that the economic and other privileges of the minority are not encroached upon by the majority.

The ideologues of the bourgeois-planter bloc generally believed that the political system of the USA, as it had evolved in the first years of the revolution, had led to the transformation of popular sovereignty into anarchy and even democratic despotism. Madi-

son even declared that during the revolution the interests of the propertied minority were subordinated to the faction of the propertyless majority. At the same time, his attitude to democracy and popular sovereignty differed in certain ways from the attitudes of the other delegates.

The majority of the delegates in Philadelphia addressed the issue of democracy in order to revile it. The notion of democracy meant, first and foremost, granting the right of suffrage to the lesser propertied strata of white Americans which Madison included in the faction of the majority (other features of democracy included solely legal principles: the separation of powers, the checks and balances, etc.). A dominant theme of the convention speeches was that the revolution and the state constitutions had given too much scope to democracy, as evidenced by the excessive growth in the number of voting Americans and the dangerously wide dimensions of popular consensus.

Madison, unlike Dickinson, Gouverneur Morris and James Wilson, argued that the system of democratic representation the way it had developed in the USA must be preserved. He spoke out against the persistent attempts of these delegates to condemn the extension of the right of suffrage in the majority of states, a right that had prevailed in the colonial period, and to reinstate the ante-bellum property qualification in the Federal Constitution. Reflecting on the right of suffrage, he spoke like an experienced architect calculating how much democracy—no more, no less—had to be incorporated in the foundation of a bourgeois-planter government in order to ensure its support by the country's white population. This calculation led him to an acceptance of the right of suffrage that had been evolving in the USA over the course of already 11 years (Madison's point of view was reinforced by the Federal Constitution). He preferred subordinating democracy to the interests of a bourgeois-planter minority not by limiting the right of suffrage or doing away with the separation of powers but by other means.

The first means of achieving this goal, according to Madison, was granting the faction of the minority the right to the separate representation of their interests in a legislative assembly. The function of representing property interests was to be carried out by the Senate, the upper house of the legislative power. The Senate, Madison pointed out, should be completely dissimilar to the House of Representatives. Government as a whole—and here he reiterated an idea that had become widely popular in bourgeois ideology since the time of Locke—was conceived for the protection of man's natural rights to life, liberty and private property. But it was the function of the Senate in particular to protect the rights of private property and represent the wealth of the nation. At the same time the Senate had to limit the democratic "excesses" of the House of Representatives and serve as an embodiment of stability and order.

In their convention speeches, articles in *The Federalist* and countless pamphlets published before and after 1787, the leaders of the upper strata who shared Madison's logic cited numerous examples showing that in the states where the lower house prevailed over the upper and where the Senate was not entrusted specifically with the function of protecting the interests of the minority, there was frequent encroachment upon the interests of private property. They were particularly upset about the state of affairs in Pennsylvania which had a unicameral legislature elected on the basis of the most democratic suffrage in the country and where, because of this, radicals had succeeded in imposing their will on conservatives. Maryland's constitution, on the other hand, drew the general admiration of moderately conservative thinkers and politicians because its small Senate (it numbered 15), elected for a long term—5 years—was vested with the power to control the lower house. To all intents and purposes, Madison and those who shared his views aimed at reestablishing on American soil the system of mixed government which the democrats had been successfully destroying during the revolution.

The most fervent proponent of mixed government in America was John Adams. He developed the concept of mixed government in a truly brilliant manner, being careful, for instance, not to confuse this tenet with the doctrine of separation of powers as even Montesquieu had done. He spoke out in favor of mixed government in 1776 as soon as work was begun to set up an independent government and succeeded in embodying it in the Massachusetts constitution which he framed in 1780. He described its legal basis in his *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States*. A leitmotif of Adams's book is the idea that no nation can endure unless it is based on a mixed form of government which is a proper composite and representation of interests of antagonistic social strata. He regarded the British system as a classic model of mixed government because its legislature embraced three forms of polity: a monarchy in the person of the King, an aristocracy in the person of the House of Lords and a democracy in the person of the House of Commons.

A concentration of absolute power in one of these forms would, according to Adams, lead to the consolidation either of pure monarchy, or pure aristocracy or pure democracy. Any pure form of government, he argued, was ruinous for a nation, for it led to the abolition of the representation of one of the social forces into which society was divided and produced bitter hostilities among them, a collapse of the pure form and, ultimately, the establishment of mixed government. Throughout his three-volume work, Adams examined the history of ancient, medieval and contemporary societies for the sole purpose of substantiating one conclusion: a nation can endure only under mixed government since the triumph of pure monarchy, pure aristocracy or pure democracy is ruinous for a nation (in striking contrast to these ideas is Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, a pamphlet in which he assailed two tyrannical forms of government—monarchy and aristocracy, and hailed what John Adams called pure democracy as the only sensible form of government).

The tripartite English form of mixed government was regarded as classical and admired not only by John Adams but also by Hamilton, Dickinson, Morris and Wilson. At the same time the ideologues of the American elite concluded upon sensible reflection that it was inapplicable in the USA, where there was neither a monarch nor an aristocracy, and that this doctrine had to be tailored to the specific nature of the country's social structure and political system. They abridged the tripartite form of mixed government into a bipartite form. To them, mixed government meant a bicameral legislature, not unlike the division of the British Parliament into the House of Lords and the House of Commons. It is important to point out that the Federalist concept of a bicameral legislature, while similar in form to the British legislative body and the constitutional model of Montesquieu, differed from them in class content. Montesquieu regarded bicameral rule as a means of bringing popular interests into conformity with the privileges of the aristocracy, whereas the Federalists held that such an organization of legislative power consisted in the separate representation not of the feudal aristocracy and the third estate but of the upper strata of property holders and the unpropertied and poorly propertied majority. In other words, the well-known 18th-century West European variant of mixed government was given a bourgeois character by the Federalists, put into conformity with the system of a class-divided society which became established in the USA.

The concept of a mixed government which provided special protection for the interests of the propertied elite contradicted the doctrine of natural equality set forth in the Declaration of Independence as well as the provision contained therein to the effect that governments are instituted to secure the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but not the right of property. At the end of the revolution the ideologues among the bourgeois-planter leaders at last resolved to openly settle scores with the definition of the nature of government in the Declaration of Independence they were dissatisfied with. At the Constitu-

tional Convention of 1787 it was unanimously recognized that the protection of the interests of private property was the government's supreme goal.

James Madison was adamant about repeating that during the revolution Americans had somehow forgotten that it was above all the interests of property that needed to be protected by the government. This "lofty" task ought to be assigned to the Senate.

In his view, the majority of the upper houses of the states' legislatures, including that of Virginia, could not serve as a model for the national Senate, since they differed little from the lower houses, shared common functions, were excessively large and were elected too frequently. Madison was satisfied with the decision of the convention concerning the tenure and number of senators: the national Senate was to consist of 26 people (2 delegates from each of the 13 states) and elected for a term of 6 years (Madison himself had suggested a 7-year term, but he was opposed to electing senators for life, a proposal strongly favored by Dickinson, Morris and Hamilton). Thus the term of office of the national Senate became 2-3 times the duration of those of most of the upper houses of the state legislatures, and it was smaller than some of the state senates in the number of deputies. The Senate was assigned more extensive functions than the House of Representatives; for example, the Senate alone could give "advice and consent" to the President in matters relating to the formation of nonclective government posts and the making of peace treaties.

In the discussions concerning the national Senate the delegates in Philadelphia were split into two groups: one of them was concerned about the exclusively social function of the Senate; the other, composed of representatives of small states, was also troubled by the prospect of the Senate becoming a means by which large states would hold political sway. As a result of a compromise, the scheme of the Senate's organization which was approved by the convention reflected the wishes of both groups: it guaranteed the reliable protection of property inter-

ests and at the same time embodied the principle of equal representation by the states.

Most of the delegates spoke out against the election of senators by the entire electorate—a practice that was widespread in the states at that time. The Virginia Plan, discussed in the session on May 29, 1787, proposed that the Senate be elected by the lower house. However, representatives of the small states moved that the state legislatures elect the national Senate, which meant depriving the voting public a right in the creation of the upper house and conceding to the supporters of states' rights.

The framers of the Federal Constitution revised from a moderately conservative stand a model of the lower house which had been instituted in the states. In this matter they clearly followed the British model and set the criteria for representation (one deputy for every 30 thousand inhabitants), more or less repeating the criteria for representation in the lower house of the British Parliament. Consequently, at the time of the Constitution's adoption the national House of Representatives was to number 65 deputies, whereas the lower house of the Massachusetts legislature at that time included 400 representatives. The term of office of the members of the House of Representatives was twice as long as that of the deputies of the state lower houses.

The greatest departure of the framers of the Federal Constitution from the legal principles underlying the system of government at the time of the American Revolution can be found in their treatment of two different and at the same time interrelated concepts: separation of powers, and checks and balances. These concepts were fundamental in the bourgeois constitutional theories of the 17th and 18th centuries. It is well known that in Western Europe they were directed against absolutism—the concentration of legislative, executive and judicial powers in the hands of one individual. Owing to the efforts of Locke, Montesquieu and their disciples, they came to be regarded as the chief weapon against political despotism and tyranny.

When promoting their ideas, leaders of the Federalists implied the very same meaning in the concepts of separation of powers, and checks and balances. They no doubt had an excellent knowledge of these principles and of their West European proponents. In No. 47 of *The Federalist*, Madison took issue with those critics of the 1787 Constitution who argued that separation of powers presupposed that these powers did not in any way interfere in one another's affairs. He suggested finding the precise meaning of this concept by turning to Montesquieu and to the English constitution which had served the French enlightener as a mirror of political freedom. Madison showed that in both Montesquieu's writings and in the English constitution the separation of powers was supplemented by the system of checks and balances. The notes of Hamilton's speech at the New York Ratification Convention contain classical definitions of how the powers ought to be separated and show every well-known means by which the executive limits the legislative and judicial powers, the legislature—the executive and judicial powers, and the judiciary—the executive and legislative powers, and by which a balance of powers is achieved.

Although the Federalists in their speeches laid emphasis on the necessity of safeguarding the due separation of powers they themselves tended to exalt the power of the executive, seeking to grant it maximum authority over the two other powers and to free the executive of checks by the legislative and judicial branches.

Protest against the derogation of the power of the executive had found expression in most of the state constitutions at the time of the revolution, and long before the Philadelphia Convention met this protest was a dominant feature of the publications of moderate ideologues.

For John Adams, the refusal to create a strong executive and duly separate it from the legislature represented one of the main reasons, along with the derogation of the significance of mixed government, for internal strife in any society. To back up his

assertions he cited examples from the history of ancient republics, paying particular attention to the sad experience of Poland, whose collapse, he felt, was the result of a failure to appreciate the strong and independent power of the monarch, the head of the executive.

Ever since the beginning of the revolution Adams had been a fervent proponent of creating a strong executive in the states. It was then that strong protests against the derogation of its role were voiced by Edmund Pendelton, Gouverneur Morris, Carter Braxton and John Rutledge. They proposed several guiding principles relating to the executive that were embodied in the Federal Constitution of 1787: the executive should consist of one person, the tenure of the executive should be of long duration, the governor should be vested with the power of legislative veto, and others.

One of the methods used by moderate Founding Fathers in the campaign to exalt the executive power was attempting to discredit by whatever means the performance of the legislative assemblies, particularly their lower houses. At the Philadelphia Convention Madison remarked that the main trend in the development of the American political system was the swallowing up of all power by the legislature. In Nos 71 and 73 of *The Federalist* Hamilton declared that the usurpation of all power by legislative bodies was a common feature of republican societies and that it was in republics that the legislative assemblies represented the chief menace to liberty. The task of the framers of the constitution, according to the Federalists, was to modify the existing model of the separation of powers and fundamentally redistribute the prerogatives between the legislative and the executive branches.

Above all, James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris, Edmund Randolph, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton insisted at the convention, it was essential once and for all to abolish the rule by which the head of the executive was chosen by the legislature. Madison also spoke out against the power granted to

legislatures to impeach members of the executive. Without rejecting the principle of impeachment, he proposed to delegate it to a specially created mixed tribunal. Delegates like Hamilton, Rufus King and Gouverneur Morris regarded the very idea of impeaching the chief executive as heresy. Leaders of the Federalists demanded further that another prerogative of the head of the executive be the appointment of nonelective federal posts. Seeking to give the executive a maximum amount of freedom from checks by the legislative branch, they at the same time unanimously called for vesting the President with the power to limit the prerogatives of Congress by means of a veto (Wilson and Hamilton, clearly following the example of English constitutional principles, suggested granting the President the power of absolute veto).

The dispute regarding the correlation of powers between the legislature and the executive brought victory, albeit not the impressive one that had been counted on, to those who favored a stronger executive. This found expression in the established procedure for electing the head of the executive, a procedure in which the national legislature plays no part. The President was vested with the power of a limited legislative veto. The power to check the head of the executive was granted to the Senate, destined, in the minds of the framers of the Constitution, to defend the interests of property and the status quo and thus capable, from their standpoint, only of allying with, not confronting, the President.

A special place in the views of the ideologues of the upper strata was occupied by the concept of an indivisible executive. This conception was incorporated in the Virginia Plan for a Federal Constitution presented at the convention's session of May 29, 1787. Besides Madison, the delegates who voiced their support for a single and indivisible executive included Gouverneur Morris, Dickinson, Wilson, Hamilton, Rutledge and Butler. Their opponents were few in number and consisted of Edmund Randolph, George Mason and Hugh Williamson.

The formula for a single and indivisible executive proclaimed that all power be vested in a single person, meaning that the executive was free from control by the legislature, and that the President be given exclusive authority to set up and administer this branch. Its source was not to be found in the British system of constitutional law, since clearly the notion of a single and indivisible executive contradicted the principle of the authoritative parliamentary government that became firmly established in 18th-century England. The Federalists had adopted it primarily from Montesquieu, a fact which is corroborated both by a comparative analysis of the views of the framers of the US Constitution and those of the French philosopher on this issue, and by references made by American proponents of an indivisible executive to the writings of their West European idol.

For the Federalists, just like for Montesquieu, the value of a maximum concentration and centralization of power in the executive lay in the swift and effective implementation of decisions. The maintenance of the social order and of economic stability on the vast territory of the USA, like the administration of such a large nation as a whole and its defense from foreign enemies, Wilson and Hamilton argued, was possible only on condition that a single and strong body made quick decisions and effectuated them with dispatch. Even though an executive consisting of two, three or more persons had been incorporated in a number of states, the Federalists felt that a plural executive was ruinous for a nation. Some shared Montesquieu's belief that a single and indivisible executive ought to be garbed in monarchistic clothing and that a republic simply could not endure in a large country.

The monarchistic view was presented at the Philadelphia Convention by Hamilton, Dickinson, Gouverneur Morris and Jacob Broom. Madison was against organizing the executive along monarchistic lines. He proposed fixing a 7-year term of office for the President (in the end the convention decided on a 4-year term). In his view a republic was the only natural and

acceptable form of government for the USA. The executive organ adopted by the convention turned out to be closer to the model proposed by Madison.

Madison was not the sole framer of the American Constitution—nor was any other delegate for that matter. But his role in the formation of its political philosophy and in many specific provisions was enormous. For that reason Americans rightly refer to him as the philosopher of the American Constitution. Madison returned from the Constitutional Convention to Virginia in the fall of 1787 as the recognized leader of the Federalists. Who would have thought that a few years later his political career would take such a sharp turn and that he would apostatize federalism as if it were a diabolical force.

The Collapse of Illusions

After the Philadelphia Convention all Madison's efforts were aimed at securing the ratification of the Constitution in his home state. The Virginia Federalists attained this goal, although they first had to overcome the resistance of a powerful opposition bloc headed by the popular political figures Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee. Madison's opponents took revenge on him by orchestrating his loss in the first elections for the Senate. Madison had to content himself with a seat in the House of Representatives.

He appeared in the first session of Congress in New York in the spring of 1789. On April 23 the First President of the USA, George Washington, also arrived there. A week later he was sworn in and delivered his first message to Congress. The House of Representatives and the Senate, imitating English traditions, likewise prepared an address. This required a return reply from Washington. All three documents were composed by the same person—James Madison. His political sympathies still lay completely with the Federalists. By a bitter irony of fate the federalist undertakings of Madison in the House of Representatives were opposed in the Senate, the

body in which he had placed such hopes, by the leaders of the Virginia Antifederalists, Richard Henry Lee and Grayson.

At the start of his congressional service Madison performed a very important democratic service: on June 8, 1789 he moved that the House consider a proposal for adding a Bill of Rights to the Federal Constitution. Madison's proposal was based on the Bills of Rights in state constitutions, which enumerated a number of bourgeois-democratic freedoms—of speech, the press, assembly, religion and some others.

The proclamation of a Bill of Rights had not been one of the purposes of the Philadelphia Convention. But the state ratification conventions of 1787-1788 made it perfectly clear that the Constitution could not dispense with such a feature. Almost half of the states agreed to adopt the Constitution only on condition that it be supplemented by a Bill of Rights in the immediate future. Intuition and the shrewdness of a subtle political strategist told Madison that the Bill would have to be another concession to democracy and that without it the Constitution would lose its effectiveness. He reckoned that the Bill of Rights could be confined to those propositions that were already contained in the state constitutions, leaving out the new proposals recommended in many ratifying conventions. These proposals were absent from the resolution he presented to Congress on June 8, 1789.

Starting in 1790, Madison's political attitude began to change with regard to Federalist policy. That year the first three Department Secretaries took office. The Department of the Treasury was run by Hamilton, whose head was filled with plans for sweeping reforms catering to the interests of the country's mercantile-financial and manufacturing bourgeoisie. He was most anxious to implement these plans and did not delay in presenting his proposals to Congress. Hamilton expected the Antifederalists and southerners to try to defeat them. But he could not believe his eyes when he saw Madison leading the opposition.

Hamilton was at a complete loss to explain the

turnabout of a man with whom he had prepared the Philadelphia Convention and coauthored articles for *The Federalist* in defense of the Constitution. In 1792 he wrote to E. Carrington that in accepting the office of Secretary of the Treasury he had assumed Madison's firm support in the general course of his administration and that aware as he was of the powers of Mr. Madison he would not have accepted the post under a different supposition.²¹

Strictly speaking, there had not been complete unanimity of opinion between Madison and Hamilton at the Philadelphia Convention. The leader of the southern Federalists could not accept the extremely intolerant attitude toward political democracy shown by the New York Federalist. But the main reason for the rift between them was not these conflicting views; it lay in the inner contradictions of the bourgeois-planter bloc and in the fact that Hamilton and Madison represented different interests within this bloc.

The bourgeois-planter bloc, which had arisen in the face of general anticolonial and foreign-policy problems, had gained strength during the American Revolution in response to the increased activism of popular movements. It attained its greatest strength the year of the Constitution's adoption, for this instrument consolidated the political power wielded in the USA by the country's two ruling classes. But the unity of the two classes, which represented different and even mutually exclusive interests, had no historical prospect. It began to show signs of cleavage as soon as the USA's domestic political and international situation achieved a certain degree of stability in the early 1790s. The Federalist system that had been embraced in 1787 began to fall apart and the arrival of the uncompromising Hamilton as head of the country's economic policies only served to hasten the embourgeoisement of the Federalist aims. Such a transformation was unacceptable to Madison.

Madison objected to the very first of a series of economic measures proposed by the Treasury Secretary—that all outstanding federal debts be paid back at face value. In 1783 Madison had agreed to a similar

proposal by Robert Morris. Seven years later he had switched his position on this issue for two reasons. During these years an enormous part of the Continental Congress's debts, loan office certificates to soldiers, had changed hands from the original holders to speculators who purchased them for a fraction of their face value. During this same period Virginia had managed to pay off almost half its federal loans whereas a number of other states had scarcely done anything to resolve this matter. Hamilton moved that the federal government assume all debts incurred by both the Continental Congress and the states. For Virginia, adoption of Hamilton's plan for having the central government pay off all US debts at face value signified, first, that the tax-paying planters would have to directly assist the financial bourgeoisie in getting richer and second, that Virginia would have to cough up more money for the sake of the insolvent states. This sacrifice on the part of the planters seemed excessive even to one so well-disposed to the "northern brothers" as Mr. Madison.

Nor did Madison approve of Hamilton's project for a Bank of the United States which would benefit only the northeastern financiers who were to become principal shareholders. The gulf between the Secretary of the Treasury and the powerful Virginian politician became increasingly wide. To counter Hamilton's innovations, Madison turned to a "strict" interpretation of the Constitution, attempting to show that the federal government, while showing indulgence toward the plans of the Treasury Secretary, reserved powers not stipulated by its creators. He sought—and found—support for his views and actions among other government officials. Beginning in 1790 Madison began to be seen more and more in the company of the acknowledged leader of the anti-Hamilton opposition, Thomas Jefferson, who was Secretary of State at that time.

From 1793 on, the rift between Hamilton and his opponents caused by conflicting opinions about the course of socio-economic development in the USA began to shift to foreign policy disputes after the

Treasury Secretary, once again bent on imposing his policy on the nation, this time in international affairs, blatantly encroached upon Jefferson's domain.

A veritable pamphleteering war broke out between Madison and Hamilton when in April 1793 the US government proclaimed its neutrality in the war between France and England. Madison demanded that the US government honor the terms of its 1778 treaties with France and ally itself with the latter. He criticized as politically dangerous Hamilton's view that owing to the governmental changes that had taken place in North America and France since 1778—the former as a result of the adoption of the Constitution of 1787 and the latter as a result of the execution of King Louis XVI in 1793—both countries were freed of all mutual obligations. The ensuing dispute between Hamilton and Madison regarding the powers of the executive and the legislature in matters of foreign policy and war (Madison considered Washington's proclamation of neutrality to be a usurpation of the right vested exclusively in Congress)²² led to an epistolary exchange of such volume that even today these letters remain an inexhaustible source of arguments for all interested in this issue.

When Jefferson left office on the last day of 1793, Madison became the sole leader of the anti-Hamilton opposition. His methods of dealing with the Secretary of the Treasury became even more refined. After submitting to Congress in 1794 a bill to raise the tonnage taxes on vessels of nations not having commercial treaties with the United States (the blow was aimed at England), Madison made use of arguments that produced confusion and discord in the camp of the northeastern bourgeoisie. It was time to put an end to the domination of British ships and merchants in US foreign trade, he said. Preventing large British vessels from trading with the USA would temporarily hurt the South by cutting cotton exports, Madison conceded. But the southern states, the Virginian politician added with pathos as he concluded his address, were ready to make such a sacrifice for their northern brothers.



Dolley Madison

Hamilton did not avoid the war of words with Madison, but he relied more on a battle behind the scenes. In 1794 Chief Justice John Jay, after being well drilled by Hamilton, was sent to Great Britain by the US government for the purpose of negotiating a commercial treaty with the former parent state. Jay returned with a document which completely destroyed any effect Madison's eloquence might have had. The Virginian's strength was utterly sapped by the blow and following Jefferson's suit he capitulated to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Madison did not return home alone, as he had done in the past. In 1794 he married Dolley Payne Todd, the widow of a Pennsylvania lawyer. Though Dolley was 17 years younger than her second husband it later became clear that she could offer him excellent advice in all matters, politics included. The marriage was a success from the start and Madison, appeased by his long-awaited domestic happiness, settled down on his patrimonial estate (it was at this time that Jefferson expressed his fear that conjugal bliss would take his partner out of public life for good).

James Madison.
A portrait by Thomas
Sully, 1809



Madison's peaceful life on the estate ended in 1798 when he received news that the Federalists had succeeded in pushing through Congress several draconian laws aimed at dealing with foreign agents. Madison, who earlier as a member of the House of Representatives had been branded by opponents as a French-hired agent since 1778, was not slow to act. He and Jefferson prepared—the former for the Virginia assembly, the latter for the Kentucky legislature—resolutions declaring the Federalist acts unconstitutional and in clear violation of the Bill of Rights. Thus Madison renewed his active involvement in political affairs. Two years later, when the Republicans attained their first victory in the presidential elections, Madison, in keeping with a previous promise he had made to the new Chief Executive, Jefferson, took office as Secretary of State.

Foreign policy disputes between the Federalists and the Republicans who took over the reins of government in 1801, had played a prominent role in the propagandistic speeches of their leaders for several years already. In the end it became customary to

see the Federalists and the Republicans as the English and the French parties. It appeared that the Federalist John Adams, Jefferson's predecessor as President, derived special satisfaction from fomenting anti-French sentiment in the country. In 1798 the Federalists circulated throughout the country a story to the effect that three high-ranking Americans had been insulted by the French foreign minister (Talleyrand hinted through his subordinates that he would not enter into negotiations with the envoys until he had obtained from the Americans a bribe for himself and a requisite loan for France). Manipulating US public opinion in this way, the Federalist government announced the following year that the USA was halting all trade with France, repealing the treaties of 1778 and ordering its vessels to wage an undeclared war against French vessels.

The propagandistic broadsides fired by the Republicans who succeeded the Federalists to power were filled with phrases about the moral obligations to the French and the need to establish a close and warm friendship with the European sister, without at the same time seeking any material gain from such relations. It seemed that these principles would in fact characterize ties between the USA and France. Fate, however, decided to subject the principles to a crucial test of endurance. Rivalries between the two European great powers, Britain and France, became so intense in the first years of the 19th century that the young North American nation found itself tempted to make profit of the situation. Jefferson and Madison could not resist the temptation and via their foreign policy apparatus conducted the kind of bargaining with the financially hard-pressed French that made the Republicans altogether worthy partners of Talleyrand.

Immediately after Jefferson and Madison assumed their high public posts, news reached the USA that Spain had handed over its North American colony Louisiana to France by virtue of a secret treaty concluded between the two countries. France now had control over New Orleans as well, the key port on

the Mississippi. Jefferson's statement that any possessor of New Orleans was a "natural and habitual enemy" of the USA, was now directed toward France. Both statesmen were seized by an uncommon expansionist fervor. Madison wrote in a report to Congress that Louisiana, New Orleans and Florida must become part of the USA either by purchase or conquest. According to the instructions of the Secretary of State, the American minister to France Robert Livingston and John Monroe, who had been sent to France in 1803 as minister extraordinary, were to obtain for the USA as a bare minimum free navigation of the Mississippi. If this proved impossible the US envoys were to cross the English Channel and immediately enter negotiations with the British government.²³

The successful negotiations of the Americans in Paris surpassed all expectations of Jefferson and Madison. Napoleon Bonaparte sold them Louisiana for 15 million dollars, as a result of which the territory of the USA almost doubled. This success resulted not so much from the skillful diplomacy of Livingston and Monroe as from the dire situation Napoleonic France found itself in at that time with regard to foreign policy and finances.

After the French Army under Leclerc suffered a defeat in Santo Domingo in 1802 and in the late fall of that year General Victor's expeditionary corps was unable to leave the ice-bound European ports to reinforce the army, France's colonial designs on America came to an abrupt end. It was impossible to return to them the following spring as France was once again preparing for war against England. Napoleon's advisers kept saying that what France needed was not the Louisiana wastelands but rather money for the war in Europe. The First Consul heeded them. Talleyrand, who had not obtained a bribe from the Americans and implored Napoleon not to destroy the empire that had taken such pains to create, was told that France would not suffer from the sale of the Spanish colony. In reply to the Americans' inquiry as to the precise boundaries of the territory purchased by them



French Foreign
Minister Talleyrand

the vexed statesman only remarked caustically that the Americans had obtained splendid terms and that they would surely succeed in deriving maximum advantage from them.

The Republican leaders resolved the issue of the precise size of the purchased territory in no time at all. Relying on intuition and a knack for sophistry they declared that since Spain had transferred to France the rights to Louisiana it had simultaneously lost its claim to all of Florida and that therefore the Americans were legally entitled to become owners of both these regions. Spain was the first to contest this in 1803. Pressuring Spain with threats, bribes and blackmail the US government and State Department clearly overstepped the boundary separating the virtues the Republican party attached to itself and the vices of the Federalists.

Then again, in 1803 the Federalists were attempting to deck themselves out in the clothes which the Republicans had donned during their years as the opposition. The Federalists accused Jefferson and Madison of blatantly ignoring the principles of the Constitution in arranging the purchase of Louisiana. Violation of the Constitution had been the main accusation the Republicans had levelled at the Federalists in



The Stars and Stripes hoisted in New Orleans

the 1790s. Jefferson's conciliatory remark on being inaugurated as President, "We are all republicans, we are all federalists," now took on a double meaning, and in its new, unofficial sense signified the levelling of distinctions between the political parties of the USA, at least in the methods they used to achieve their goals.

After 1805 it became clear that the USA was far from capable of playing the "laughing third party" in its relations with France and Britain. In 1806 and 1807 Napoleon issued decrees that vessels of all countries, neutral ones included, were forbidden from entering British ports under threat of seizure and confiscation by France. In Britain's edicts, passed after Napoleon's proclamation of a continental blockade, all vessels of neutral countries carrying on trade with France or her allies were required to pay a duty upon entering British ports. The French decrees and the British edicts equally denied the USA's sovereign rights as a neutral power. But the repressive measures of Britain were particularly severe and abusive toward the USA. Great Britain, which had consolidated its naval superiority after the crushing defeat in 1805 of the French in the Battle of Trafalgar, could seize American vessels at any point along the ocean routes, while the French were in a position to control only European ports. The USA considered it a national outrage that the British conducted searches of American ships aimed at finding and punishing "deserters"—American sailors who were British by birth.

As Secretary of State, Madison spent considerable time on theoretical studies, intending to expose British violations of the national sovereignty of the USA and of the maritime rights of neutral nations. Aided by the works of such authorities as Grotius and Pufendorf he attempted to show that the arrest of any passenger or crew member of all neutral vessels except military personnel of warring nations constituted an infraction of international law. His interest in this question waxed even more after he was informed that the crews of the US merchant vessels comprised 9 thousand former British subjects—almost half of their most able and skilled personnel.²⁴

Neither long discussions between Madison and British envoys nor his pamphlets on the rights of neutral nations, nor the efforts of American diplomats in London produced the slightest effect on Westminster. All patience was exhausted in 1807

when the British searched the American trading vessel *Chesapeake* and arrested four of her seamen. To top it all, this was not a private vessel but one belonging to the US government. Anti-British sentiment among Americans reached its peak. They compared the actions of the Royal Navy to the provocations of the King's soldiers at Lexington in 1775. The desire for revenge was as strong among Americans now as it had been in the first year of the American Revolution. The US government, however, did not share such extreme sentiments. The French envoy in Washington communicated to Talleyrand that the President did not want war and that Mr. Madison feared it as never before. When in late 1807 the USA learned of a new British edict about restricting the trading rights of neutral powers the Republican administration decided to try to force the warring nations to respect American sovereignty by means of peaceful coercion: Jefferson wrote up the draft, Madison put the finishing touches on it and Congress adopted a bill for an embargo on all American foreign trade. It was assumed that neither Britain nor France could take such a blow and would soon revoke their repressive policy at least in regard to one neutral country—the USA. The immediate consequences of this, however, were of a completely different, altogether dramatic nature. And the main repercussions were felt when Madison himself was President.

In 1808 Madison was elected US President (in 1812 he was reelected to this post). Among the problems inherited by his administration the most complicated were considered those of foreign policy, with which Madison was best acquainted.

Madison was regarded by everyone as a follower of Jefferson's foreign-policy line, but when its development reached its logical conclusion, the declaration of war on Britain in 1812, a clearly distinct boundary began to be drawn between the two politicians. Stories began to spread telling of how President Jefferson knew how to keep the USA out of war and how President Madison had dragged the country into war (today these stories can be found in the stories of

venerable historians). The War of 1812 was known as "Mr. Madison's war" from its very beginning. And as the USA's unpreparedness became evident in the course of the war, the major strategic and tactical errors of America's military leadership only heightened Madison's culpability in the eyes of many of his countrymen, young and old alike. This perception of Madison's role in the events was rooted in the negative attitude of his critics toward the war with Britain (the personification of responsibility for it was explained in large part by the fact that following the adoption of the Constitution war was seen by Americans as a function of the executive). However, with time the motives for criticizing the war and its "perpetrator" Madison underwent substantial changes in the USA.

The contemporaries of Madison who were opposed to the War of 1812 represented the views of those bourgeois quarters of the northeastern states who valued the lucrative nature of their economic ties with Britain and were ready for the latter's sake to accept London's flagrant violations of US sovereign rights. As for the American historians critical of this war they pointed out that the USA gained nothing tangible in the war and risked too much. Present-day American historians perceive the War of 1812 as a senseless blow to the "Atlantic civilization," a notion devised to suit the interests of the US administration. The well-known American historian William Miller explains the USA's declaration of war on Britain by the "uncivilized" state of his country at that time and excoriates the primordial spiritual world of his countrymen with a quote from a British newspaper of the early 19th century: "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play? Or looks at an American picture or statue?"²⁵ Madison, it is true, is not looked upon as a barbarian by anyone. Generally he is seen as a spineless intellectual who was under the thumb of the War Hawks Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun.

Given this attitude of American historians toward the War of 1812 it is easy to understand why they

are so attentive to those facts that show the chance character of the war and to those circumstances which, had they occurred days and months earlier, could have averted the Anglo-American conflict. It was shown, for example, that when in response to London's violation of their rights as a sovereign power, Congress declared war on Britain on June 18, it had not received the news, owing to the still undeveloped means of communication, that two days before the British government had agreed to observe these rights. Attention was drawn to the fact that Madison had decided to wage war when Britain was wholly absorbed in its fighting with France and when no one was able to foresee Napoleon's impending defeat in Russia which gave Great Britain free rein to punish the excessively emboldened American Republic. However interesting and significant such facts may be, they do not in any way diminish the importance of other circumstances which made the Anglo-American war unavoidable. Of greatest interest to us is the role of Madison in the development of these circumstances.

When Madison took office as President, it was already perfectly clear that the USA, in severing trade ties with Europe, was not hurting Britain and France as much as it was tightening the noose on its own neck. American shipowners and merchants openly protested the general embargo as soon as it was declared at the end of 1807, and three days before he handed over the reins of government to Madison, Jefferson revoked the unpopular and onerous measure. Madison sought subtler ways of fighting for the USA's maritime rights. It was with this end in mind that he worked out two laws, the latter of which, adopted in 1810, declared US trade open to all countries but assigned Madison the power to lay an embargo on trade with either of the warring nations that continued to interfere with American shipping after the other side had agreed to respect its rights.²⁶

The French government very quickly found a way to turn this law to their own account. It was brought to Madison's attention that Napoleon was willing to

repeal all restrictive measures regarding American trade and the US President, without waiting for a confirmation of this news via diplomatic channels, declared a halt to economic ties with Britain as of January 1811. After this relations between the USA and Britain at sea got even worse. Meanwhile an official confirmation of Napoleon's edict on the recognition of America's maritime rights never appeared. As it soon became clear, it had never been issued. After waiting just enough time to slacken the vigilance of the Americans, the French began once again, this time with even greater zeal, to seize the vessels of the nation which, owing to the naivete of its leaders, had unwittingly played into the hands of Napoleon's policy of the continental blockade.

Napoleon's treachery must not, of course, be overlooked in examining some of the specific reasons which led to the exacerbation of Anglo-American contradictions toward 1812. Madison's anti-British stand must be seen as another of these reasons. It is significant that as early as 1808 he wrote in a personal letter that if England did not respect the USA's maritime rights after the embargo had been lifted war with England would be inevitable.²⁷ He did not express similar thoughts regarding future relations with France. The US President liked to show that England violated American rights far more often than France, that the actions of London insulted the US national pride to a much greater extent (unlike the French, the British took it upon themselves to arrest, try and hang US seamen) and that specifically Great Britain was guilty of the original sin of infringing on the sovereign rights of the USA. But the deeper reasons of the War of 1812 are to be found in the fundamental contradictions between England and the USA at sea and on land, contradictions that came to a head precisely between 1810 and 1812.

One of these reasons lay in Britain's persistent and gross violations of the USA's sovereignty, in the desire to suppress America's economic and political independence. The British empire was unwilling to accept the loss of its North American holdings and

John C. Calhoun



the USA was fated to take up arms against its former parent state in order to prove once again its right to an independent existence. The message Madison delivered to Congress in 1812 proposing a declaration of war constituted a list of British violations against US trading and maritime rights. There was, however, yet another reason which was not made known in either the President's war message or any other official documents and which therefore escaped the attention of American historians for many generations. That reason was US expansionist claims on territory lying to the south and northwest of its boundaries. These claims met with the uncompromising opposition of England.

In the early 19th century many Americans were preoccupied with the idea of expansion. Favorable conditions existed in the country for its flourishing growth: the entire North American continent was available for colonization and its indigenous population could not offer serious resistance. Throughout its history the USA periodically "ripened" for the absorption of new territory. In 1812 expansionists thought and talked about two such territories: Flo-

Henry Clay



rida and Canada. Starting in 1810 a faction of War Republicans, or War Hawks, began to form in Congress. Its leaders were Henry Clay of Kentucky and John Calhoun of South Carolina. Their unanimity personified the complicity between the western and the southern states, the former intending to seize Canada and the latter, Florida.

Florida belonged to Spain. However, it was not Spain, utterly debilitated by Napoleon's invasion, that hampered the expansionist designs of the southerners but rather its powerful ally, England. The USA feared that Spain would suddenly decide to hand Florida over to England. For both the South and the West the key to expansion lay in a war against England. In order to advance westward the Americans had to wipe out and "throw back" the Indian tribes. The Indian chief Tecumseh was able, however, to count on the support of British Canada and, owing to this support and his own ability to unite the poorly coordinated tribes, successfully withstood the onslaught of the American settlers. The American expansionists concluded that in order to successfully seize Indian lands in the future they

would first have to dislodge the British from Canada. In 1811-1812 their leaders in Congress demanded that Madison declare war on England.

It was a common feature of American historiography of the 19th century to portray Madison as a pacifist, an opponent of both the expansionists' plans and a war against Britain. Enjoying wide currency was the Federalists' contention that the War Hawks, headed by Clay and Calhoun, had forced Madison to declare war on Britain, threatening otherwise to nominate a different Republican candidate for the 1812 presidential election (this version proved to be untrue). George Bancroft, the father of American historiography, spoke with Madison in 1836 and became convinced that the latter was a proponent of peace and that Britain had left him with no other choice but to go to war. The myth of Madison as a dove, however, did not withstand the test of time.

Mention has already been made of Madison's uncompromising attitude to British violations of US maritime and mercantile rights. He was also outraged by England's attempts to curb the expansionist drive of the populations of the South and West. Even when he was still Secretary of State Madison staunchly defended the idea that having purchased Louisiana from France, the USA automatically acquired possession of Florida as well. In 1810, as soon as the first suitable occasion presented itself, President Madison went ahead with his initiative and convinced his Cabinet of the need to annex western Florida. In a secret message to Congress he noted that the USA could not wait until Spain handed over Florida to Britain, that immediate action was called for and that Congress would do well to vest the executive with the power to annex one or several parts of the said territory.

Madison supported expansion insofar as it gratified the interests of the planter class, complied with the aspirations of broad segments of the American population and, moreover, was a means to mitigate the dangerous contradictions between factions. This

attitude of the President toward expansion, together with his anti-British sentiments, explains why toward 1812 Madison had almost identical views regarding foreign policy with Clay, the leader of the War Hawks.²⁸ It is significant that on the threshold of the 1812 elections Treasury Secretary Gallatin remarked that Madison's defeat at the polls would lead to a disgraceful peace with Britain and to the USA's complete subordination to its former overlord. Of course, the War of 1812 did not come about by Madison's choosing; its origin was the inevitable result of many objective factors. However, in declaring war the US President did not in any way forego his principles or act in defiance of his own wishes.

The unsuccessful military operations of the USA in the War of 1812 have been frequently and graphically recounted by American historians dissatisfied with the war's results. They have also unsparingly assailed Madison for his blunder. His decision to declare war with no more than 10 thousand soldiers and not even the bare minimum of funds in the treasury to strengthen the army and increase its arms has been equated with a highly risky venture. Gaillard Hunt, one of Madison's biographers, revealed that at the time of the war Madison had "strange faces about the cabinet table, and coadjutors who were inexperienced and even disloyal."²⁹ This circumstance, which made itself felt more than once in the course of the war, was aggravated by the fact that the President, "a man of refined manners and many talents," according to Calhoun, did not, alas, possess the gift of authority, so necessary to keep those around him in check.

As a result of these shortcomings, Madison's Cabinet was the scene of much reshuffling. The office of the Secretary of the Treasury was occupied by four men, the Secretaries of War and the Navy were changed continually, the Secretary of War was suddenly appointed the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of State took over the post of the Secretary of War. While casually removing many Secretaries from office, Madison could not, however, bring himself for considerable time to dismiss War Secre-

tary Armstrong who committed one mistake after another (he remained at his post even after failing to ensure the elementary defense of Washington which was hastily seized and burned to the ground by the enemy). All these facts suggest that Madison was neither an ideal leader of the country nor a mobilizer of the nation's armed strength in time of war. But they do not in any way suggest, as Hunt would have one believe, that Madison was generally less fit for the office of President than most of his predecessors and successors—very few other Presidents have been saddled with such an onerous burden of authority.

The military operations of the USA in 1812 began with the foiled invasion of Canada, a fiasco which discredited Jefferson's optimistic words to the effect that this province would fall as soon as the Americans stepped foot in it. The situation of the USA improved somewhat in 1813 and early 1814 after a series of successful operations on the Canadian front and in the southwest where the resistance of Indian tribes was crushed. But by the summer of 1814 the US army already found itself fighting a defensive war. Following the defeat of Napoleon in Europe, England was able to move enormous forces into its war against the USA. The British were also helped out in the final months of 1814 by a succession of three powerful landings in the central, northern and southern parts of the USA (the country's capital was burned down by the central landing on August 24-25). With the British having control of all sea routes by which new reinforcements were delivered for their landings, the situation of the young republic became increasingly critical. At that point the Americans had to hang all their hopes on the success of the peace negotiations which began in Ghent on August 8, 1814. The peace treaty concluded on December 24, 1814 put the USA in the same position it had been in before the war. The Americans had not achieved any of the goals that had urged them into the war. They could at least find gratification in the fact that they had succeeded in retaining their former boundaries.

The war with Britain had given rise to bitter and, at

times, extremely dramatic disputes within the USA. Madison was the first American President to be faced with the real threat of a rupture between the North and the South. During his administration, however, the instigators of the nation's division into two parts were not the slaveowning planters, as was later the case in the 1860s, but the bourgeois merchants and financiers of the North.

Guided by self-seeking economic interests, the bourgeoisie of the northeastern states had opposed the war from the very beginning. Britain was their main trading partner. The Federalists who, as in Hamilton's time, headed the northeastern bourgeoisie, launched a virulent campaign against the "French agent" Madison and the Republicans. Daniel Webster, one of the Federalist leaders in Congress, accused the President of acting on the orders of Napoleon. From words of protest the Federalists moved to deeds, boycotting the actions of the government. In messages to Congress and in letters to political allies Madison complained again and again of the governors of Massachusetts and Connecticut who had refused to put militia units under the orders of the Commander in Chief of the US army, the northeastern financiers who had steadfastly refused the government's requests for loans, the New England merchants who, despite all prohibitions, continued to carry on their lucrative trade with the enemy and who even supplied its troops with provisions. In the end the President was ready to attribute all the US failings in the war to the actions of the unpatriotic northerners. Although Madison clearly overstated the situation as a means of justifying many of his own mistakes and miscalculations, there is still a certain amount of truth in what he said.

In 1814 the Federalists stepped up their campaign to prove to the inhabitants of the northeastern states that the only way to free themselves from the dictatorship of the monstrous slaveowners was to break away from the South and create their own confederation. In order to go through with this plan they called a convention of New England states which met in

1814 in Hartford, Connecticut. Rumors reached Madison that the northeastern "brothers" were intending to create their own army and negotiate a separate peace treaty with Britain. The President, who, had the Federalists succeeded with their plan, would surely have gone down in history not as one of the founders of the nation but as one of its destroyers, found himself in very low spirits at that time.

The separatists did not succeed in getting their way in the Hartford convention. Its members made great demands on the government but hoped, nevertheless, to carry them out within the framework of the Union. The threat of disunion was removed and the Republicans breathed a heavy sigh of relief. The impressive victory of the American army at New Orleans toward the end of the war and the Treaty of Ghent raised the credibility of the government and the Republicans in the eyes of much of the American electorate. Republican propaganda, having ably played up the fact that the final battle of the war was won by the Americans, trumpeted its victorious outcome for the USA. Taking advantage of the propitious turn of events, Madison and the Republicans reminded the Federalists in detail of all their pro-British and antigovernment actions. As a result, the prestige of the Federalists among voters began to sag, their broad social base eroded, and the party of Hamilton soon became history.

Although Madison and the Republicans succeeded in discrediting the Federalists, this did not in any way signify a rejection of the USA's capitalist course of development of which Hamilton and his party had fought. Moreover, when Madison became President, the tense international situation forced him to seek recourse in many of Hamilton's projects which he had tried so hard to defeat in the 1790s.

When the charter of the First Bank of the United States, established 20 years before at the insistence of Hamilton, expired in 1811, Madison was one of the first to speak out in favor of its rechartering. The government's grave financial difficulties during the war forced the President to step up his efforts to have



James Madison in 1833

Congress pass a resolution calling for the establishment of a Second Bank of the United States; this institution was, in fact, chartered in 1816. In his messages to Congress of 1815 Madison underscored the necessity of boosting manufacturing and pointed out that in examining the issue of tariffs, Congress ought to take into account the need for developing the nation's industry. The country, wrote the President, is keenly interested in the construction of roads and canals, which might best be carried out under the authority of the national government. The Federalists declared that the President had robbed the party of its platform. In his final message to Congress, Madison, as if fearing that he had gone too far in his concessions to Hamiltonian principles, renounced the idea of federal subsidies for the construction of roads and canals.

The expiration in 1817 of Madison's term as President marked the end of his active political career. He spent the remaining 19 years of his life almost exclusively at his patrimonial estate in Montpelier. During this time the crack in the foundation of America's national unity, which Madison had played such a prominent role in shaping, was becoming more and

more apparent. Both the bourgeoisie and the planters wanted greater elbowroom. Observing this scene with sadness, Madison turned to the only means of salvation available to him under the circumstances—he offered counsel on how to arrive at possible compromises. History has proven them to be utterly illusory. Irreconcilable differences between the bourgeoisie and the planters, who had been united for several years during the American Revolution, became evident immediately after the USA gained its independence. These divisions deepened over the next decades and a quarter of a century after the death of Madison led to a fierce struggle for power between the nation's two ruling classes. The political career of the fourth US President, with all its surprising inconsistencies and vicissitudes also reflected, more completely than the careers of the other Founding Fathers, all the complexity and contradiction in the relations between the bourgeois and the planter classes.

Conclusion

THE LEGACY OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS: THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

For more than two centuries the ideas and deeds of the Founding Fathers have been attracting the attention of various sections of the American public and have been the subject of a heated ideological and political debate. What is the actual place of the Founding Fathers in American political tradition? There can be no simple answer to this question for it covers a number of aspects and calls for a very delicate synthesis of the past and the present which should reflect at least three assessments: the importance of their activity and principles for their time, a change in the social message and appeal of their behests in subsequent epochs, and the attitude of present-day America to their legacy.

For all their class limitations, the results of the political activity of the American Founding Fathers were of considerable progressive import for their time. It was an epoch of a revolutionary transformation of the feudal-absolutist system; the struggle for bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms of which the Founding Fathers were exponents was in accord with the dictate of the time and demands of social progress. The efforts of the leaders of the young American Republic, which were aimed at putting an end to colonial oppression and affirming republican principles, inspired the progressive minds in Europe and pushed forward the world revolutionary process of toppling the feudal order.

The historical situation, the unique natural conditions and geographical position were propitious for the development of the progressive social system in the United States. It emerged as a bourgeois state, bypassing all the preceding socio-economic formations, so that American capitalism did not have to destroy feudal foundations, a process which took other countries scores and even hundreds of years to complete. This enabled the bourgeois socio-economic system in the USA to advance with seven-league strides, and speeded up the establishment in the country of republican and other progressive principles inscribed on the banner of the Enlightenment.

Separated from the feudal European states by the Atlantic Ocean, the United States was in a favorable position for the successful development of republican principles and the triumph of the anticolonial revolution in the country. The American Revolution, in contrast to the Great French Revolution that followed in its wake, did not have to defend itself from numerous mighty feudal powers. As soon as the anticolonial war was over, Commander in Chief of the American revolutionary army George Washington relinquished his powers leaving it to the Constitutional Convention and the state conventions to decide on the form of government. Washington's conduct was a striking contrast to that of the military leaders of the European bourgeois revolutions, Cromwell and Napoleon, who eventually turned into political dictators. The noble act can be explained, however, not by his unique personality but rather by the natural and historical conditions which were favorable for the formation of the North American Republic. The European monarchies could afford to close their eyes on the triumph of the bourgeois republic in North America, because it did not portend an export of revolution to the Old World or threaten to upset the balance of forces in the international arena.

Acknowledgement of the progressive nature of the transformations effected by the American Revolution and the American Republic gives no ground for their idealization. American liberal historians' attempts to

prove that an "empire of reason," which the European enlighteners had dreamed about, was established in North America under the impact of the revolution is to me an example of an apologetic interpretation. The ideals of the Enlightenment were by far not realized in full, like, for instance, its fundamental principle of equal legal and political rights for all, as it did not embrace the blacks, Indians, women and indigent white men. Only a few of the leaders of the American Revolution, and only Thomas Jefferson of all the Founding Fathers, protested against the extremes of the economic inequality. And yet such protest was an integral part of the views of the progressive European enlighteners headed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

The US War of Independence ushered in, rather than completed, the era of bourgeois revolutions in North America. It took the United States almost another century and one more bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Civil War, to establish in the country the fundamental bourgeois-democratic right — equality of all before law. The ousting of the indigenous Indian population from their native lands and their extermination, the enslavement of millions of blacks, the aggravation of the economic inequality among the white Americans were the reverse side of the capitalist progress in the USA in the era of bourgeois revolutions. The clear-cut provision of the Declaration of Independence concerning the inalienable Rights of All Men to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness remained but a beautiful dream for most North Americans.

Other fundamental principles of the Declaration of Independence were likewise put to a severe test. The republic's craving for territorial aggrandizement, for instance, was also at odds with these principles. In the initial period of the independent existence of the United States its expansionist ambitions were covered by the doctrine of isolationism which proclaimed the US refusal to participate in military and political blocs or interfere into conflicts between warring states. This doctrine was adhered to by all

Founding Fathers and by their successors. Such a stance by the leaders of the republic signified a conscious desire to make class interests of the bourgeois-planter bloc commensurate with the actual chances for their realization by a still weak republic the United States then was. The political leaders of the independent United States believed the American nation to be chosen and exceptional but thought that first the United States needed to survive and stand firmly on its feet before this could be announced to the world.

In the 19th century, the American Republic, while officially abiding by the doctrine of isolationism and neutrality, at first secretly and then more and more openly embraced the Manifest Destiny doctrine according to which the United States was predestined to extend the principles of its social system to the entire American continent and eventually to the whole world. The Manifest Destiny doctrine acquired an increasingly aggressive nature which fully revealed itself when American capitalism entered its monopoly stage.

This occurred at the end of the 19th and early 20th century, bringing with it a decisive revision of the bourgeois ideologists' attitude toward the democratic behests of the American Revolution. The monopoly bourgeoisie attempted to reduce the natural-law based doctrine of the Declaration of Independence to a single principle of freedom of socio-economic relations from state interference. In practice this was tantamount to suppression of any attempts by the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie to improve their position with the help of socio-economic legislation. And even the most cynical ideologists of monopolies, the Social-Darwinists who called for relying on the "natural selection" of the "most adapted" individuals and who rejected pity for the "less adapted" representatives of the human race (i.e. the exploited masses) donned the toga of champions of Jeffersonian principles.

Jefferson's maxim "the government is best which govern least" was particularly to the liking of the

Social-Darwinists. But Jefferson used it to censure political despotism, whereas Social-Darwinists resorted to it to sanctify the unbridled exploitation of the majority of society by a handful of monopolies. This was a flagrant mockery of the Jeffersonian concept of human rights: it was replaced by the law of free accumulation and freedom of private property. Reflected in this were the metamorphoses of the historical evolution of the concept of bourgeois individualism: formulated by 17th and 18th-century bourgeois ideologists, it was then in accord with the aims of the struggle against the feudal class inequality, but in the 20th century, when it was taken up by monopolies, it acquired an openly reactionary meaning.

In the 20th century, American bourgeois ideologists actively adjusted to their interests not only Jefferson's principles but also those of Hamilton, who, like his antagonist, made the greatest contribution to the formation of the ideological and political traditions of the USA. Today many American researchers are apt to view the entire 200-year history of the United States through the prism of struggle between Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian principles. In the 20th century, US bourgeois ideologists and politicians have been choosing between Jefferson and Hamilton depending on which of the two trends of economic development in the era of imperialism, free competition among the monopolies or state regulation, gets the upper hand in the given historical period. In the periods of development of state-monopoly capitalism bourgeois leaders usually gave preference to Hamilton, the advocate of strong federal government with extensive socio-economic powers.

The 20th-century foreign policy of the USA is downright flouting of the behests of the Declaration of Independence, the birth certificate of the United States. As soon as monopoly capital appeared in the world arena, it began to openly violate the principles of the natural equality of nations and the national sovereignty of other states. US imperialist quarters

attempted to impose colonial enslavement on Cuba, Haiti, Mexico and the Philippines. In 1918, US President Woodrow Wilson attempted to deny the Russian people the right to choose their own path of development. The 1945 Declaration of Independence of Vietnam reproduced the principle of national self-determination contained in the American Declaration of 1776, but it is precisely this principle that the imperialist quarters in the USA sought to drown in blood on the Vietnamese soil in the 1960s. In various periods of modern history the principles of the Declaration of Independence were flouted by the USA in Laos, Cambodia, Iran and the Dominican Republic. Today it is going to deny the peoples of Nicaragua, Grenada and El Salvador the right to implement the Declaration's basic precepts.

In the epoch of monopoly capitalism it was not only the principles of the democratic Declaration of Independence that were trampled upon in the USA but also those of the moderate Federal Constitution of 1787. A case in point is the separation of powers doctrine that underlies the Constitution. A distinctive feature of its evolution in the 20th century has been the growth of presidential powers. The Constitution, for instance, provided for the exclusive right of Congress to declare war, but in the 20th century this right has come gradually to be usurped by the President. It has been estimated that of the more than 200 cases the USA has resorted to the use of its armed force abroad, only in 5 war was declared by Congress. Another graphic example testifying to the extension of presidential powers is the President's misappropriation of the right to conclude international treaties (known as executive agreements). It is not without reason that presidential power in the USA is today referred to as imperial.

But the least fortunate in the 20th-century United States has been the Declaration of Independence which was signed by Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John and Samuel Adams and other Founding Fathers. The US history has demonstrated that the natural and inalienable rights of people to Life,

Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness it proclaimed are unattainable for scores of millions of Americans. It somehow escaped the memory of the official quarters in the USA that the first law on the civil rights of the American blacks was passed as early as 1866 and was then sealed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. In 1875, a civil rights second law was adopted under the pressure of the black people. But, just as the first one, this law remained only on paper. Dr Martin Luther King justly called these laws unpaid bills.

Laws on black civil rights were passed under other US Presidents as well: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Yet today the rights of the black Americans are just as far from being equal to those of the white Americans as decades ago.

Like their predecessors, present-day American politicians declare their loyalty to the principles of the American Revolution, the spirit of 1776. While referring over and over again to the natural and inalienable rights of man, they remain indifferent to the lack of rights of tens of millions of blacks and chicanos, the white poor and unemployed in their country. The women's campaign for a constitutional amendment on their equal rights with men has so far been futile. The equation, by the present US Administration, of the national liberation movements to terrorist action is downright blasphemy with regard to the American Revolution. It should be recalled that this type of branding was resorted to by the British authorities at the end of the 18th century in their propaganda war against the American Founding Fathers. Ironically, the struggle against national liberation revolutions has been proclaimed by official Washington as a priority task in the global policy of the United States. This perhaps is the most striking illustration of the chasm between the ideals of the American Revolution and the political principles of the present American leadership.

Notes

Chapter One

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- ² *The Works of John Adams*. Ed. by Ch.F. Adams, Vols 1-10, Boston, 1850-1856, Vol. 10, pp. 282-83.
- ³ Burke Davis, *George Washington and the American Revolution*, Random House, New York, 1975, p. 11.
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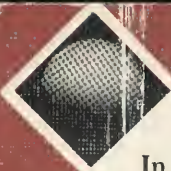
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